

# GURU TEGH BAHADUR

*MARTYR AND TEACHER*

FAUJA SINGH  
GURBACHAN SINGH TALIB



PUBLICATION BUREAU  
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# GURU TEGH BAHADUR

*MARTYR AND TEACHER*

*by*

FAUJA SINGH

GURBACHAN SINGH TALIB

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## IMPRIMIS

(First Edition)

Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur fell a martyr to the freedom of conscience and belief, under orders of Aurangzeb, a ruler who with his puritanical virtues had an attitude of narrow exclusiveness in matters of religion. Repudiating the policy of religious tolerance initiated by his ancestor Akbar, he unleashed a campaign of persecution on his non-Muslim subjects. This is a fact of history too well-known to need any detailed exposition. Sikhism of which Guru Tegh Bahadur was the Ninth Apostle, has all through upheld the spiritual approach in matters of faith, and its message has been free from rancour of any kind against any set of belief. In Guru Granth Sahib itself hymns of ethical and spiritual teaching composed by Muslim saints have been included.

Finding religious persecution assuming intolerable proportions and surrounded by the wail of an oppressed population, Guru Tegh Bahadur decided to do what a man of God in his situation must do—to stand by those who were tyrannized over. In the spirit of his holy grandfather, Guru Arjan Dev, he resolved to lay down his life rather than compromise his principles. The story, as told in *Bachittar Natak* by Guru Gobind Singh, is well known. While historians may differ on this detail or that of the great episode of his martyrdom, its character as an act of upholding the moral principle in human relations is indisputable. In the words of Guru Gobind Singh :

Guru Tegh Bahadur was protector of the *tilak* and *janeu*  
(of the Hindus).

He performed a unique act in the *kaliyug*.

He made the supreme sacrifice for the sake of the man of faith.

He gave his head but uttered not a groan;  
He did this deed to defend *dharma*.  
He gave away his head, but weakened not his resolve.  
Casting off his bodily vesture to the suzerain of Delhi,  
He departed to the Realms of the Spirit.  
None who came into the world performed such deeds as  
he did.  
At the departure of Tegh Bahadur.  
There was mourning in this world.  
Laments of grief filled the world of men;  
In the land of the Gods rang shouts of adoration.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's noble example has inspired hundreds of thousands to lay down their lives for the principles of freedom and humanity.

A further word is called for in presenting this book on Guru Tegh Bahadur to the reading public. Prepared during 1974 by two senior teachers of this University, Professor Fauja Singh and Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib, the release of the book has been delayed owing to circumstances beyond our control. I am happy that now, in the Tercentenary year of the great event of the holy Guru's Martyrdom (1975), it is being released to the public under befitting auspices. I have every hope it will be studied with the attention it deserves.

This book is one of Punjabi University's outstanding literary contributions on the occasion of the observance of the Martyrdom Tercentenary. More publication work of a distinguished level has been taken in hand by the University. The labour and devotion with which this book has been written by the two scholars above named make it a remarkable piece of work, both in point of accuracy of presentation of the life and teachings of Guru Tegh Bahadur and the great sense of responsibility with which it has been written. It is hoped it will be studied reverently and attentively by all Sikhs and non-Sikhs alike.

*Punjabi University,  
Patiala.*

*5th November, 1975*

INDERJIT KAUR SANDHU  
*Vice-Chancellor*

## FOREWORD

*(First Edition)*

This book on Guru Tegh Bahadur was planned some months back, to be produced and published in time for the anniversary of the Guru's martyrdom in 1974, the year preceding the occasion of the Tercentenary of the martyrdom. Anticipating the occasion, plans are already afoot to celebrate it in a manner befitting its significance. The great sacrifice made by one so great and holy as Guru Tegh Bahadur to vindicate the right of the people to profess and practise the faith of their own choice deserves to be highlighted because it meant, in fact, the assertion of the principle of justice for which the ruling Mughal rulers of the day had very scant regard. The martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, therefore, has immense significance for our own times when the forces of hate and fanaticism and of tyranny are still very dominant and assertive. For this reason, the life and career of Guru Tegh Bahadur is an important landmark in the history of the Indian people as a whole and not only in that of any particular sect or group.

Considering the ample volume of interpretative and historical literature produced on the occasion of the two recent centenaries, Guru Gobind Singh's Birth Tercentenary (1966) and Guru Nanak's Birth Quincentenary (1969) it is only to be expected that a good deal of publication work will also be stimulated in connection with Guru Tegh Bahadur's Tercentenary. It was in this context that Punjabi University, Patiala, which has already brought out a considerable volume of literature on history and religion commissioned a fresh book on Guru Tegh Bahadur's career and teaching. This task was entrusted to two of our senior teachers, Professor Fauja Singh and Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib. I am glad that

they have completed their labours in this connection well within time. This book is produced through their joint efforts. Professor Fauja Singh who is responsible for the historical portion, has brought to bear on his treatment the latest information available from unpublished sources and oral research. This makes his treatment of Guru Tegh Bahadur's life fuller and more authentic than any previous work on this subject. Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib has made a fresh and sensitive rendering of Guru Tegh Bahadur's *Bani* into English, which conscientiously places before the reader also the peculiarities of the idiom in which the Guru expressed his thought in unfolding the spiritual truths. He has also traced in his Introduction the history of inclusion of this *Bani* in Guru Granth Sahib and has dealt with a few issues which have arisen in connection with some of the *Slokas*.

I am sure this book will prove a useful guide to the totality of Guru Tegh Bahadur's life and teaching and stimulate further research.

KIRPAL SINGH NARANG

*Vice-Chancellor*

*15th January, 1975*

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**PART I**

**A LIFE-SKETCH OF GURU TEGH BAHADUR**

**FAUJA SINGH**



**The Enlightened One is he  
Who neither fears nor frightens**

*—Guru Tegh Bahadur*

## INTRODUCTION

Up to now writers on Guru Tegh Bahadur have mainly depended for historical material on the works of Bhai Santokh Singh and Giani Gian Singh, both of the nineteenth century. The earlier sources such as *Bansavali Nama* of Kesar Singh Chhibbar, *Mehma Parkash* of Sarup Das Bhalla, *Gurbilas Patshahi Das* of Koer Singh Kalal, *Gurbilas Patshahi Das* of Sukha Singh and others have been used only for corroboration or to fill in the gaps left by later writers. On points of conflict the practice almost invariably has been to prefer the versions of Bhai Santokh Singh and Giani Gian Singh.

The present work, an humble attempt at best, has drawn mostly on *Bhat Vahis* and *Panda Vahis* and related works, sources of first-rate historical importance untapped so far. It is indeed very fortunate that some of the Bhat families who had attached themselves closely to the Sikh Gurus have preserved their valuable records through the vicissitudes of time. Another precious primary source is the *Panda Vahis* of major Hindu pilgrimage centres of Kurukshetra, Pahewa, Hardwar, Prayag and Kashi. These original sources, if explored diligently, are sure to throw abundant light on many an obscure spot in our understanding of the Guru period. Their evidence in the reconstruction of the life-sketch of Guru Tegh Bahadur has been of tremendous help, because with them a far greater degree of precision and perspective than could otherwise be possible, has come within the range of achievement. My grateful thanks are due to Giani Garja Singh, whose unremitting labours in his capacity as Oriental Research Scholar in the Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala,

were instrumental in the procurement of this valuable source material.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's life clearly brings out the moral plane on which the Sikh movement had been resisting the high handedness of the Mughal State from its very inception, but more actively from the pontificate of Guru Arjan Dev. The particular issue facing the Ninth Guru was that the fanatical religious and oppressive economic policies of Aurangzeb had created an intolerable situation for the vast majority of the Indian people. The Guru, Apostle of Righteousness (*Dharam ki Chadar*), felt divinely commissioned to sacrifice his life with a view to putting an end to tyranny. Meanwhile, a group of Kashmiri Brahmins under the leadership of Kirpa Ram arrived and narrated to cement the Guru's resolve to make the supreme sacrifice in the case of *Dharma*.

The fresh evidence derived from the *Bhat Vahis* and *Guru Kian Sakhian*, an unpublished work based on these *Vahis*, has shown that the opposition to Aurangzeb's tyranny did not assume the form of an active armed struggle as was my view some eight years back. Ghulam Hussain, a late eighteenth-century writer and the chief authority for this view, has, it is now obvious, for some personal and communal considerations exaggerated and misrepresented things. The idea of the armed struggle, though quite in keeping with the tradition of armed struggle under Guru Hargobind, is not supported by any other source and hence is untenable.

In the preparation of this monograph, I have been benefited by the advice of several friends. My grateful acknowledgements are particularly due to Sardar Kirpal Singh Narang, Vice-Chancellor, Dr Ganda Singh, Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib and Professor Taran Singh. I am also obliged to my colleagues in the Department of History, with whom I had discussions on a number of points. I must also thank Sardar Kirpal Singh, our Proof-reader, for his sincere help and co-operation during the printing of this work.

*Date 27.1.75*

FAUJA SINGH

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## ON GURU TEGH BAHADUR'S MARTYRDOM

The Lord\* protected their paste-mark and sacred thread;  
And performed a mighty deed in the Kali Age.  
To protect the Good he spared no pains;  
Gave his head but uttered not a groan.  
For the protection of Righteousness he did this noble deed :  
Gave his head but not his Ideal.  
To do theatrical acts and such unclean deeds,  
Would make devotees of God ashamed.

### *Couplet*

He broke the pot-sherd of his body on the head of the King of  
Delhi;  
And departed for his Divine Abode :  
None ever performed a great deed like Tegn Bahadur.  
The world was in mourning;  
The whole world wailed but the world of gods showered  
acclamations.

– *Bachittar Natak*

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\*Guru Tegn Bahadur

## THE HERITAGE

The rise of Sikhism was unique in several respects. One of these was its rearing and shaping by an unbroken line of ten Divine Masters (Gurus) spread over a period of over two centuries. The new, or as it may be termed Sikh, society which emerged from this long process of evolution was conceived by the first of the line, Guru Nanak. Its basic image also was delineated by him in all its essential aspects. But realistic and practical in approach as he was, he felt, and rightly so, that his mission, to be meaningful, must be continued and brought to fruition even when his mortal human frame was no more. And so was started the line of successive Gurus, which only concluded with the tenth in the line, Guru Gobind Singh. When that happened, the exalted office of Guruship was divided into two parts which were bestowed respectively on the holy *Adi Granth* and the corporate body of the community, *Khalsa* by name. In this continued line of succession of Gurus, Guru Tegh Bahadur stood ninth and is popularly called the Ninth Guru.

Ranking ninth in the order, Guru Tegh Bahadur was heir to all that had been done by his eight illustrious predecessors. It is thus only fit and proper that before taking up his life and work we should attempt a general view of development of Sikhism prior to his ministry.

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was born at Talwandi Rai Bhoi in 1469 A.D. His father Mehta Kalu was a Bedi (*Khatrī*) by caste and a *Patwari* by profession. At about the age of thirty the Guru resigned his position as officer-in-charge of the provisions store in the service of the Nawab of Sultanpur and embarked upon

his long itinerary as a roving monk. In the course of this spiritual ministry extending over a period of 20 years or so the Guru journeyed over not only the length and breadth of his native country but also across countries like Sri Lanka, Arabia, Iran and Afghanistan. Afterwards, he exchanged the garb of a monk for that of a householder and settled down to found the town of Kartarpur on the western bank of the Ravi and adopted a farmer's occupation. It was here that the Guru preached by practice his ideals of life : spiritualism, devotion to work, and commonweal. The ideals thus practised and preached are embodied in melodious verses incorporated in the *Adi Granth* under the opening caption of *Mohalla I*. The fundamental doctrine preached by the Guru postulates that God, creator of the universe, omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent, is One, and besides Him there is none. Being descended from the common source His creatures are members of a single family and should live as such, bound by congenial fealty and established in the consciousness of a unity underlying the diversity of name and form. As is a drop of water to the ocean, or a spark to the flame, so is the individual related to the All.

Truth was the quintessence of the Guru's teaching. In so far as our worship, he said, is rendered in the light of this truth, it is meaningful; otherwise mere ritualistic exercises and sectarian pilgrimages are exercises in self-deception. The way of truth alone will lead to a life of fullness, love, sympathy, service, humility and honesty. In the sunshine of this truth and with the cultivation of the spiritual root all other essences of humanitarian potential unfold as naturally as buds on the tree. The man endowed with this vision does not turn away from this world as in a 'vale of soul-making.' He truly transcends the barriers of caste, colour and creed and attendant feelings of hatred and aversion. The unholder of truth would rather lay down his head than compromise with unrighteousness.

Guru Nanak inspired the people to take up cudgels against the corrupt social practices of his times. He branded Babar's aggressive forces as the 'wedding guests of sin.' He has sketched a heart-rending picture of the tyranny perpetrated by these

barbarian hordes at Sayyedpur and has gone, in his righteous indignation, to the extent of castigating God Himself for permitting such harrowing devastation and destruction of the helpless humanity. He has unflinchingly exposed the corruption, cruelty and carnage of these blood-thirsty beasts of prey. Another aspect of the selfsame doctrine was to awaken a sense of self-respect amongst the down-trodden masses belonging to the outcaste and other exploited sections of society, as also the neglected woman-kind. The Guru identified himself with the lowest of the lowly and sang paeans to the glory of woman as the 'Mother of Kings'. His voice against exploitation was as fearless and daring as against any other social and political injustice. These were the basic tenets of Guru Nanak's philosophy and he envisaged a society free from all ills of exploitation of man by man and based upon the ideals of fraternity, liberty and equality. Towards the realization of these ideals he propagated the institutions of common worship, social brotherhood and communal kitchen.

Guru Nanak nominated Guru Angad as his successor who took over the spiritual ministry in the year 1539 A.D. Guru Angad's pontificate extended over a span of thirteen years. He fostered and strengthened the institutions established by his Master. He enriched the *Gurbani* with his own contribution. He made a thorough emendation of the existing vernacular alphabets and evolved a reformed *Gurmukhi* script which was adopted as the medium of writing and instruction. Overtopping all these contributions was his effort to safeguard Sikhism against the sinister influences of asceticism which was rampant under the impetus of Baba Sri Chand and as such the Guru was successful in maintaining the tradition as defined by the First Guru.

Guru Angad Dev nominated his beloved disciple Amar Das to Guruhood in 1552 A.D. Guru Amar Das's spiritual ministry extended up to 1574, over a period of 22 years. His missionary zeal spread Sikhism far and wide. He knew that the majority of the converts to Sikhism hailed from Hinduism and that their conversion would not last unless a complete break with the old tradition was established. In furtherance of this object the Guru structured

new cultural and formalistic modes. He constructed a sacred well at Goindwal which, in time, assumed the importance of a centre of pilgrimage and superseded the traditional ones at Hardwar, Prayag and Banaras. To eradicate the evil of caste system, the Guru made it obligatory for all desiring to see him to dine beforehand at the communal kitchen. In a similar bid, women were forbidden to wear the veil. The practice of *sati*, too, was condemned as nefarious and Sikh women were under an imperative command to desist from such practices. Another major step that the Guru took was the establishment of 22 religious centres (*Manjis*) to propagate Sikhism. This imparted a dynamic force to the spread of Sikh movement. The Guru further ordained that his followers should visit Goindwal thrice a year on the occasions of Baisakhi, Diwali and Maghi. The underlying motive was to maintain a living contact with the devotees and in this manner to ward off extraneous influences. The Guru's *bani* is incorporated in the *Adi Granth* under the caption, *Mohalla III*.

The Third Guru nominated Guru Ram Das as his successor. Guru Ram Das officiated from the year 1574 to 1581. He was instrumental in spreading and strengthening Sikhism further. He instituted the system of *Masands* which was parallel to Guru Amar Das's system of *Manjis*. The *Masands* were responsible for disseminating the message of the Gurus and were also collectors of donations made by the devotees. The donations were subsequently deposited by them into the Guru's treasury. This subscription was needed for the construction of the new centre of pilgrimage which the Guru was planning in the newly founded town, Chak Ram Das. This town was founded on a piece of land purchased for Rs.700/- from the land-owners of village Tung.

On his passing away in 1581 A.D. Guru Ram Das was succeeded by his son Arjan Dev. The period of Guru Arjan Dev is very significant in the development of the Sikh movement. In the midst of the sacred tank constructed by his father, Guru Arjan Dev constructed the world-famous temple, Harmandir Sahib. The foundation of this temple was, by common Sikh tradition, laid by Hazrat Mian Mir, a famous *Sufi* saint of Lahore. Fourfold entrance



from the four directions symbolized the freedom of entry to persons of all denominations irrespective of cast, colour and creed. In the year 1590, the Guru founded the town of Tarn Taran and constructed a big tank there. In 1595 A.D. he founded the town of Sri Hargobindpur. In course of time all these places assumed the importance of major Sikh centres. In the result, thousands of people came under the influence of the Guru's teachings and became his ardent followers. He became the supreme preceptor and guide of his people in matters celestial as well as terrestrial. Both in weal and woe he stood by them. On their behalf he negotiated with Akbar for reduction in the state demand of land revenue and the Emperor accepted his plea. At another time, during the outbreak of a famine, he helped the people to dig wells to overcome their difficulties. All these activities were highly conducive to the promotion of Sikhism in the countryside. However, ranking above all these achievements was the Guru's compilation of the *Adi Granth* which now constitutes the sacred scripture of the Sikhs and is revered by them as their holy ever-living Guru. In addition to the *Bani* of the preceding four Gurus he made a contribution of his own and further incorporated such selections from the teachings of outstanding saints and *Sufis* as corroborated the edicts of the Sikh Gurus. All this material was edited in such a flawless manner as to leave no scope for spurious interpolation. Thus were the Sikhs provided with their equivalent of the *Bible* and the *Quran*.

These prodigious achievements under the leadership of the Guru aroused envy and malice in the camps of his opponents, especially the orthodox sections of Hindu and Muslim communities. They made concerted endeavour to malign the prospering community in the eyes of Muslim rulers. Among them Shaikh Ahmed Alif Sani, the *Naqshbandi* leader of Sirhind, was exceptionally hostile to the rising popularity of Sikhism.

The Shaikh declared Sikhism as an enemy of Islam and vociferously incited the rulers to crush it. The Mughal Emperor, Jehangir, was particularly impressed by this hysteria and when he came to Lahore tracking down the rebel prince Khusrau, the lieutenants of Alif Sani, such as Murtaza Khan, obtained warrants for the

arrest of Guru Arjan Dev. The Guru was soon arrested and incarcerated in Lahore on the false charge of collusion with Khusrau. A heavy fine was imposed on the Guru which he refused to pay. In consequence, he was made to undergo excruciating tortures and was finally martyred in 1606 A.D. This martyrdom proved to be a turning point in Sikh history. According to a traditional report the Guru, prior to his martyrdom, sent word to his son and successor, Hargobind, to take cognizance of the rigour of times and to assume arms in defence of his spiritual ministry. In compliance with this behest the Sixth Guru modified the tradition of spiritual canonisation and wore two swords as symbols of two aspects of authority, viz. terrestrial and ecclesiastical. This fine synthesis of worldly and spiritual realities signifies the completeness and perfection of the Guru's philosophy. Under the changed circumstances military training was incorporated as a prominent discipline in the framework of the routine programme. The *Masands* and the general body of Sikhs were all enjoined upon to contribute and donate weapons and allied instruments of war. The religious lyrics incorporated in the *bani* were tuned to heroic measures. *Akal Takhat*, a place of high secular authority, was established to negotiate and dispose of terrestrial affairs. A fortress called Lohgarh was commissioned at Amritsar as a bulwark of self-defence. Thus, the crest-fallen zeal of the Sikhs which had suffered a serious blow on the martyrdom of the late Guru, was revived to challenge and to fight against tyranny of the rulers. The establishment viewed the Sikh programme as fraught with danger to its security. So, Emperor Jehangir arrested the Guru and locked him up in the Gwalior fort.

This, however, did not shake the rock-like determination of the warrior Guru and he resumed the heroic programme on his release. In 1627 Shah Jahan ascended the throne. After a few years the events precipitated into an open confrontation between the Mughals and Sikhs. Soon some battles were fought and the Guru's forces inflicted heavy reverses on the royal forces. The situation, however, was not opportune for the widespread struggle. Under the circumstances the Guru retired to the Shivalik Hills

after the battle of Kartarpur and developed the town of Kiratpur. The remaining nine years of his life the Guru spent there.

A distinguished feature of Guru Hargobind's programme was to travel about and to preach the Sikh doctrines. For this purpose he journeyed far and wide and established many new centres of pilgrimage and raised sacred monuments. He eliminated many of the shortcomings which of late had crept into the working of the *Masand* system. He deputed his son Gurditta to assume the mantle of Guru Nanak's eldest son, Baba Sri Chand, and to conduct missionary work for the propagation of Sikhism in the manner Baba Sri Chand had been doing it in the past several decades. Guru Hargobind shuffled off the mortal coil in 1644 A.D. and the mantle of Guruhood fell on Guru Har Rai—the seventh in the line.

The new Guru's ministry extended from 1644 to 1661. For the greater part of the period peace reigned supreme. Despite that the heroic and martial tradition initiated by the Sixth Guru was continued by him and a contingent of 2200 armed men was always kept in readiness to meet an emergency. Taking an undue advantage of the Guru's calm and clement nature the *Masands* and some other unscrupulous people started domineering over the conscientious and law-abiding Sikh masses. Guru Har Rai was thoroughly conversant with the internecine struggle mounting between the liberal and conservative wings of the Mughal empire. The conflict between Aurangzeb and Dara Shikoh was an offshoot of this very tension and the Guru sympathised with Dara's cause. Dara conceded defeat at the hands of the fanatical forces of Aurangzeb. Thereafter he sought shelter in Punjab and the Guru mobilised his forces to fight for Dara but the latter gave up in despair and fled from the field. Aurangzeb felt bitter about this alignment of the Sikhs with his enemies and in retaliation adopted a harsh attitude towards them.

The Eighth Guru, Harkrishan Dev, shepherded the community during the period from 1661 to 1664. He had an old head on young shoulders. He was invited for parleys at Delhi. Undaunted by consequences, he accepted the invitation and proceeded to

Delhi where he satisfactorily resolved the doubts of Emperor Aurangzeb about his credentials as the spiritual leader of the Sikhs. But he was not destined to live long. While at Delhi, residing at the Rajput Raja Jai Singh's *haveli* in Raisina, now marked by the site of Gurdwara Bangla Sahib, he succumbed to a severe attack of small pox in 1664. Before he breathed his last, he nominated Baba Tegh Bahadur as his successor who commenced his ministry with effect from 1664.

The foregoing account offers just a broad idea of the development of Sikhism during the period prior to Guru Tegh Bahadur's accession to Guruship. Even so, it provides an insight into the system of values which went into the making of the Sikh society. In this system primacy was given to spiritual values such as faith in and devotion to the One Supreme Lord, the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer of all. But spiritualism was to be practised not in isolation from the world in the manner of ascetics, but was to constitute the bed-rock of all secular life. Thus social commitment or involvement in the affairs of the world with a view to facing its challenges and serving the cause of humanity was an essential part of the evolving Sikh tradition. A house-holder's life, if informed by moral values of love, truth, humility etc., was preferred to the life of a recluse doing nothing and depending for his livelihood on others, a real parasite. Tyranny in any form was intolerable to this Sikh tradition and in meeting it, use of arms if absolutely necessary was not only permitted but glorified. Such a struggle would be a struggle of righteousness (*dharamyudh*) in which every suffering was a noble sacrifice, the noblest of all being the sacrifice of life, shahadat. A tradition such as this was an urgent need of the time in face of Mughal hostility. The growing solidarity and strength of Sikhism had alarmed the powers-that-be and some armed clashes had taken place during the time of Guru Hargobind. The stage was practically set for a fresh round of confrontation between the two when Guru Tegh Bahadur ascended the *Gurgaddi* in 1664 A.D.

## II

### TEGH BAHADUR THE SAHIBZADA

Guru Tegh Bahadur was the fifth and youngest son of the sixth Sikh Divine Master, Guru Hargobind. Among his illustrious ancestors, Guru Ram Das, the founder of the city of Amritsar, was his great grandfather and Guru Arjan Dev, the founder of Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar, the compiler and co-author of the Sikh holy book, *Granth Sahib*, and the first martyr Guru, was his grandfather. He hailed from the Sodhi branch of the *Khatris* of Punjab. The names of his four elder brothers, in order of age, were Gurditta, Suraj Mal, Ani Rai and Atal Rai. He also had one sister, Bibi Viro, who was only next to Gurditta in age.

Regarding the birth of Guru Tegh Bahadur several dates have been mentioned but the generally accepted date is *Baisakh Vadi 5*, 1678 BK which corresponds to April 1, 1621 A.D.<sup>1</sup> The author of *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin* has affirmed<sup>2</sup> that on the auspicious occasion of Tegh Bahadur's birth Guru Hargobind invoked *Akal Purkh* to bestow on the new child unflinching courage to fight forces of evil and to work for the establishment of truth and *Dharma* to the last breath of his life. As we shall see later, the father's aspirations and expectations of his little son were subsequently realized in full measure.

By the time of Tegh Bahadur's birth Guru Hargobind had apparently established a working rapport with the Mughal Emperor, Jehangir. He had accompanied him to Kashmir and now there was every hope that no untoward event would henceforward mar the good relations between the two. But during the year 1621, the very year Tegh Bahadur was born, occurred two armed clashes in quick succession which showed that as yet troubles could

not be ruled out altogether. The conflict arose out of a local Khatri Gherer *Zamindar*, Bhagwana, offering resistance to the Guru's plan of developing the new-founded city of Hargobindpur. In the action the *Zamindar* was killed. Soon after, Rattan Chand, son of the deceased landed chief and Karam Chand, son of the late Chandu, Mal of accursed memory, made common cause and excited the *Faujdar* of Jullundur to send an expedition against Guru Hargobind. Once again the Sikhs had the upper hand and frustrated the sinister attempt at the battle of Rohilla.<sup>3</sup>

Amritsar, the palce of Guru Tegh Bahadur's birth, had already assumed the role of the capital town of Sikhism. The holy tank, the revered Harmandir rising in its pristine beauty in its midst, the *Akal Takhat* (recently constructed to serve as the supreme temporal authority of the Sikhs) and above all the chrismatic presence of Guru Hargobind had lent the place a rare charm and a unique dignity. Devotees from far and near, in groups or severally, rallied to this Mecca of theirs from all sides, just as moths would rally to the flame. Every day, both morn and eve, assemblies were held where prayers were offered, hymns were sung—often to martial tunes—and talks given on Sikh tenets. From the rise of the day, the Guru was busy receiving gifts of weapons, horses, etc., from his faithful visitors, underscoring the virtues of martial valour and heroism, watching feats of physical strength such as wrestling bouts and *gatka* play and supervising lessons in horsemanship and swordsmanship. In between he would find time, occasionally, to organize hunting excursions, then considered the best mode of imparting training in war manoeuvres. All this left a deep imprint on the impressionable mind of young Tegh Bahadur. He showed keen interest in learning the military arts and in a few years became an adept in the use of weapons and horses. In this particular aspect his best teacher and benefactor was the famous Baba Budha who after the Gurus was the most revered man among the Sikhs.

No less attention was paid to the other aspects of young Tegh Bahadur's education. Among other things he acquired proficiency in the religious philosophy of Sikhs and Hindus and attained a

good mastery of Punjabi, Braj Bhasha and Sanskrit. In music his interest was equally deep and his poetic compositions give evidence of his excellent grasp of several of the principal musical modes of the country. Bhai Gurdas whose works were recognized by Guru Arjan Dev as the key to the *Granth Sahib*, was by far the most erudite and renowned of his teachers.

Guru Tegh Bahadur owed not a little to his parents and teachers in respect of his qualities of head and heart. From his mother Nanaki he imbibed tenderness of heart, love of solitude and charitableness. From his warrior father he learnt the noble qualities of fearlessness, courage, will to fight tyranny, love of travels, skill in the use of arms and horses and above all the urge to uphold *dharma*. Bhai Budha inculcated into his sensitive mind the tendency of mysticism which he himself had imbibed from Guru Nanak, founder of the Sikh faith. Bhai Gurdas imparted to him a philosophic and poetic bent of mind.

During these early years of his life, Tegh Bahadur did not always stay at Amritsar. He did a lot of travelling in company with his father and other members of the family. In course of these tours he paid visits to Tarn Taran, Khadur Sahib, Goindwal and Kartarpur—all of them being sacred to Sikh memory.<sup>4</sup> At Goindwal and Kartarpur his stay was for pretty long periods. However, no interruption was caused in his studies because his teachers, Bhai Budha, Bhai Gurdas and others were mostly staying with him.

It was about this time (precise date is not known) that the marriage of Sahibzada Suraj Mal was solemnized at Kartarpur. Baba Gurditta, the eldest son of the Guru, had been married off much earlier at Amritsar. So had been Bibi Viro, his only daughter. Atal Rai and Ani Rai had died early. So the only Sahibzada left unmarried now was Tegh Bahadur, the youngest of all brothers. In his case, too, things moved rather fast. His engagement was decided and celebrated on the very occasion of Suraj Mal's marriage. The wedding ceremony followed soon after. The bride, Mata Gujri, was the daughter of one Lal Chand, a Subhikhi Khatri of Lakhnaur near Ambala, who had migrated and settled at Kartarpur. His younger son, Kirpal Chand, who rose to promi-

nence in the time of Guru Gobind Singh, also migrated with him, whereas his elder son, Mehar Chand, continued his residence at his ancestral place. Family links were thus maintained with Lakhnaur and on many occasions in subsequent years the place was visited by Guru Tegh Bahadur, Mata Gujri and their son, Guru Gobind Singh.

Emperor Jehangir died in 1627 and was succeeded by his son, Shah Jahan. With the accession of the new ruler who happened to be less tolerant than his father, the Mughal attitude towards Guru Hargobind changed for the worse. The change first found expression in certain minor clashes which came to pass during Shah Jahan's visit to Lahore in 1628. After a few years in 1634 (14 April) the first serious engagement between the two parties took place at Amritsar,<sup>5</sup> in which the Guru, though greatly outnumbered, had the upper hand. Apprehending another attack, the Guru decided to quit the place and to get out of the Mughals' way. He proceeded *via* Kartarpur to the Malwa region. For eight long months he had undisturbed peace and travelled widely in the region and enlisted fresh troops to meet the Mughal challenge. The villages of Bassian near Rai Kot, Takhtupura, Patto Hira Singh, Bhagta and Lambhwali are only a few of the places sanctified by his visits. With a view to putting a stop to the Guru's activities in this region, the authorities sent a contingent of troops in his pursuit. A battle took place between the two parties at Marhaj (Lahira) on the 17th of the month of *Poh*, 1691 BK (16 December 1634).<sup>6</sup> Once again Guru Hargobind's forces had the upper hand. The success thus gained encouraged the Guru and he felt strong enough and decided to march back in the direction of Amritsar. Reaching Kartarpur on the way back, he fixed up his camp temporarily. The moment the imperialists came to know of this, they felt restless and determined to dislodge him forcibly. Their task was facilitated by the desertion to their camp of Painda Khan, a Pathan general of the Guru. In the battle that ensued<sup>7</sup> (26 April 1635) both Painda Khan and the Mughal Commander were killed and victory sided the Sikhs. But realizing that the Mughals would not leave things at that but would soon make another and a much



greater bid to oust him, the Guru voluntarily abandoned the palace and set out towards the Shivalik Hills. But he was given a hot chase and at Phagwara a running battle took place between the two on the 1st of *Jeth*, 1692 BK (29 April 1635 A.D.).<sup>8</sup> The enemy, however, failed to cause much damage to the retiring Sikhs and the Guru was able to make his way safely to Kiratpur where some land had been granted to him by Raja Kalyan Chand of Kehlur in 1681 BK (*Baisakh Puranmashi*/23 April 1624 A.D.).<sup>9</sup>

Sahibzada Tegn Bahadur was an eyewitness at least to three of these battles, if not all of them. His physical presence at Amritsar, Kartarpur and Phagwara at the time of fighting is undoubted, though about the battle of Lahira it is not possible to say anything definitely. This shows that along with the rest of Guru Hargobind's family, Tegn Bahadur had to pass through terrible times. There is also strong evidence that the young Sahibzada took part in the battle of Kartarpur and performed feats of rare heroism. This was remarkable for a young lad of 14 years and every one was full of admiration for him, most of all his parents. His mother Nanaki was looking on from the top storey of her house when her son was engaged on fighting and dealing out havoc to the enemy. The father, Guru Hargobind, was so much pleased with his heroic performance that according to a popular Sikh tradition, in a thrill of exuberance of joy, he changed his name from Tyag Mal (believed to be the original name) to Tegn Bahadur meaning, Hero of the Sword. The eldest son of Guru Hargobind, Baba Gurditta, also acquitted himself valiantly in the fighting.

Kiratpur, the place Guru Hargobind selected for his headquarters after the period of his open clash with the government, was ideally situated for peaceful work, for it lay at a respectable distance from the main highway interlinking Delhi and major Punjab towns, usually trodden by government official parties, forces and convoys. The place had been in the possession of the Guru for the last eleven years and a sort of a settlement, too, had grown up in the meantime. The foundation stone of this settlement, we are informed by the *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi*, had been laid in 1624 A.D. by the famous *Udasi saint*, Baba Sri Chand (eldest son

of Guru Nanak) at the special request of Guru Hargobind and Baba Gurditta. That the Guru had thought of founding a new Sikh centre here at the foot of the hills as long back as that, speaks volumes of his foresight. But he continued to function in the plains as long as he could and decided to shift to Kiratpur only when the continued hostility of the Mughal authorities rendered it difficult.

At Kiratpur Guru Hargobind and his entire family lived together and continued doing so right till 1644 when the Guru breathed his last. Not much is known about the Guru's activities during this period, but it may reasonably be presumed that he continued his programme of training his people in military skills by means of weapon-training, horsemanship and hunting excursions. Occasionally, he would go out in the hills as well as in the plains on missionary tours. Sahibzada Tegn Bahadur took deep interest in all this and would often accompany his father on his hunting expeditions and missionary tours.

In 1638 occurred the death of Baba Gurditta, which left a deep impress on the mind of young Tegn Bahadur. It was for the second time that a son of the Sixth Guru had earned his displeasure by indulgence in occult powers. Atal Rai had done it many years ealier at Amritsar and had been severely reprimanded for this act of indiscretion. He took his father's displeasure to heart and met an early and premature end. Baba Gurditta now committed a similar indiscretion for which he got an equally severe reprobation from his father. His end, too, was similar to that of his younger brother Atal Rai. The lesson of these two incidents was too strong for Tegn Bahadur to forget. That he could never be unmindful of this fact is amply evidenced by the resoluteness with which during his incarceration at Delhi he resisted the insistent demand of the authorities for the display of a miracle.

So long as Baba Gurditta was alive, it was widely known that he would succeed his father Guru Hargobind. His early death posed a problem. His eldest son, Dhir Mal, was arrogant and ambitious and was not thought fit for the exalted office. But his younger son, Har Rai, was of a different mould altogether and Guru Hargobind thought favourably of him. This upset Mata Nanaki

who after Baba Gurditta's death cherished the idea that her son Tegn Bahadur was the best suited candidate for Guruship among all the surviving claimants. It is said that she even remonstrated with her husband to this effect. But Guru Hargobind's mind was made up and nothing could budge him from his resolve. Tradition has it that he satisfied her by saying that her beloved son would get his turn in due course.<sup>12</sup>

In 1644 A.D., after the passing away of the Sixth Guru Mata Nanaki along with her son Tegn Bahadur and his wife Mata Gujri shifted to Bakala and took up permanent residence there. Bakala is a historic village in the Amritsar District, about two and half miles north of Beas Railway Station. In the seventeenth century it was a flourishing business centre, situated at a short distance from the banks of the river Beas. Here in this village lived Bhai Hari Chand Lamba and Hardevi, father and mother of Mata Nanaki. Here also lived Bhai Mehra, a well-to-do and devout disciple of Guru Hargobind. The Bhai had built a beautiful house here and dedicated it to the Guru's family. Thus Baba Tegn Bahadur, his mother and his wife found at Bakala a very congenial atmosphere and passed their days most happily. The Baba now spent much of his time in meditation, which may well be clear from a meditation cell of his which has been preserved up to date. But he was no recluse severing all links whatsoever with the outside world. He attended to household affairs as other people did and also had the occasional pleasure of going out ahunting. His interest in the affairs of Kiratpur was maintained all through with the help of his brother-in-law, Kirpal Chand, who had elected to stay at Kiratpur and serve in the armed forces of Guru Har Rai.

After staying at Bakala for about twelve long years, Baba Tegn Bahadur along with his family decided to move out and visit some of the principal holy shrines of the country. With that object in view, he first proceeded to Kiratpur where many other members of the Guru-family were living.

The pilgrimage party which set out from Kiratpur sometime before the rains of the year 1656 A.D. (1713 BK)<sup>13</sup> included, besides Baba Tegn Bahadur, Mata Nanaki and Mata Gujri, Kirpal

Chand (Tegh Bahadur's brother-in-law), Mata Hari (Suraj Mal's wife), Dayal Das (elder brother of Bhai Mani Singh), Gawal Das (son of Chhote Mal Chhibbar of Jehlum), Chaupat Rai (son of Pera Chhibbar and younger brother of Chhote Mal Chhibbar), Sangat (son of Binna Uppal) and Sadhu Ram (son of Dharma Khosla).<sup>14</sup> They wended their way through Ropar and Banur and reached the first big sacred centre, Kurukshetra, around the middle of winter of the same year. From here they left for Hardwar and according to *Bhat Vahi Talauda* they were present there on the *Baisakhi* day of 1714 BK (29 March 1657 A.D.).<sup>15</sup> After staying there for some months, the party left for Prayag (Allahabad) *via* Garh Mukteshwar, Mathura and Agra.<sup>16</sup> Prayag was reached in the beginning of 1661 A.D. According to *Bhat Vahi Purbi Dakhni* Tegh Bahadur and his family were present at Prayag on the full-moon day (*Puranmashi*) of *Baisakh*, 1718 BK (19 April 1661 A.D.). After a few months' stay there, the onward journey was resumed. The party reached Kashi (Banaras) on *Assar Sudi* 5, 1718 BK (21 June 1661 A.D.).<sup>17</sup>

From Banaras they proceeded on to Sasaram and Gaya. At Gaya they met a devoted Sikh of Guru Hargobind, Bhai Jaita Seth who took them to Patna. Some writers like Jassa Singh Binod and Kesar Singh Chhibbar mention that it was during their stay here at this time that the future tenth Divine Master, Guru Gobind Singh, was born to Mata Gujri. But the correctness of this view is disputed by many writers.

The Seventh Guru, Har Rai, passed away on *Katik Vadi* 9, 1718 BK (6 October 1661 A.D.). When the news of his death reached Patna, Baba Tegh Bahadur decided to return to Kiratpur to join in the mourning. On the way back together with many other people he arrived at Prayag on 5 *Magh*, 1719 BK (3 January 1663 A.D.).<sup>18</sup> When he was approaching Delhi, he learnt that the late Guru Har Rai's son and successor Guru Harkrishan Dev had arrived in Delhi accompanied by his mother, Mata Sulakhni. Thereupon, he changed his programme and resolved to break his journey at Delhi. The actual date of his arrival in Delhi, according to *Bhat Vahi Purbi Dakhni* and *Guru Kian Sakhian*, was *Chet Sudi* 5, 1720 BK

(21 March 1664)<sup>19</sup>. During his visit to Delhi he stayed at Dharamsala Bhai Kalayana where a large number of devout Sikhs including Bhai Bagha, Bhai Nanu and Bhai Agya Ram came to pay their respects to him. Baba Ram Rai, elder son of the late Guru, Har Rai, also called upon him at this place and informed him in detail about the visit of Guru Harkrishan Dev to Delhi. Soon after that Baba Tegh Bahadur, accompanied by his mother and other people, paid a visit to Raja Mirza Jai Singh's residence in Raisina (a small village just outside Delhi) and met Guru Harkrishan Dev and Mata Sulakhni and personally conveyed to them his deep sense of sorrow and sympathy in their bereavement. Having done that, he decided to leave immediately for Bakala wherefrom he had commenced his pilgrimage.

*References and Foot Notes :*

1. Dr. Trilochan Singh, *Guru Tegh Bahadur* (Delhi, 1967), p. 9-ft. n. 3.
2. Kavi Sohan, *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin*, Chapter 10, Shlokas 1036-38.
3. *Punjab History Conference Proceedings*, 1971, p. 136 : Dr. Fauja Singh, Art: Chronology of the Battles of Guru Hargobind. The account given here is based on *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi*, a copy of which is available with the Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala.
4. Khadur Sahib derives its significance from its being the headquarters of Guru Angad Dev. Guru Amar Das, and Guru Ram Das for the greater part of his ministry lived at Goindwal. Guru Arjan Dev founded three cities, namely Tarn Taran, Kartarpur and Sri Hargobindpur, but his main centre was at Amritsar.
5. *Punjab History Conference Proceedings*, 1971, p. 136.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. The foundation of Kiratpur was laid down on the *Puranmashi* (full-moon day) of *Baisakh*, 1681 BK (1624 A.D.) by Baba Sri Chand, eldest son of Guru Nanak, at the request of Baba Gurditta, eldest son of Guru Hargobind. This was done under the instructions of Guru Hargobind to whom the land had been granted by the Raja of Kehlur. *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi*, (ms.) (Punjabi University, Patiala.)
10. See *Ikhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Mualla* (News of Emperor Bahadur Shah's reign), news-entry dated 13 May 1710/25 *Rabi-ul Awwal*.
11. *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi* (Punjabi University, Patiala).
12. Bhai Santokh Singh, *Gur Partap Suraj Granth*, *Commonly called Suraj Parkash*, Ras 8, Ansu, 43.
13. Sarup Singh Kaushish, *Guru Kian Sakhian* (1790 A.D. 1847 BK), Sakhi 13. This work is so far unpublished.
14. *Bhat Vahi Purbi Dakhni* (Punjabi University, Patiala).
15. *Bhat Vahi Talauda* (Punjabi University, Patiala).
16. There is another, and perhaps greater, possibility that from Hardwar the party returned to Kiratpur or Bakala and then after a few years, in 1659 or 1660 A.D. Baba Tegh Bahadur, accompanied by his family and some other people, left for Mathura, Agra Prayag, Banaras, Gaya and Patna. In support of this view it may be mentioned that according to the *Panda Vahi Khem Chand* (Hardwar) Dayal Das, one of Guru Tegh Bahadur's companions at this time, visited Hardwar in *Jeth Sudi* 5, 1716 BK (17 May 1659) carrying the mortal remains of his mother and his elder brother Amru for immersion in the holy waters of the Ganga. Sewa Singh, *Shahid Bilas*, ed. Garja Singh, Giani (1961), p. 25, ft.)

17. *Bhat Vahi Purbi Dakhni*, (Punjabi University, Patiala) records the names of almost all people who arrived at Banaras in company with Baba Tegh Bahadur. From the *Bhat Vahi* :  
 “Guru Tegh Bahadur ji beta Guru Hargobind ji Mehla Chhate ka Banaras aae; sal satrai sai atharan Asar sudi Panchmi; gaile Nanaki ji aai Mata Guru Tegh Babadur ji ki; Mata Hari ji aai istri Guru Suraj Mal ki; Bhai Kirpal Chand aaya beta Lal Chand Subhiki ka; Bawa Dayal Das aaya beta Mai Das Jalhane ka; Gawal Das aaya beta Chhote Mal Chhibbar ka; Chaupat Rai aaya beta Pera Chhibbar ka; Sangat aaya beta Binna Uppal ka; Sadhu Ram aaya beta Dharme Khosle ka”.
18. *Bhat Vahi Purbi Dakhni Khata Barhtian* (Punjabi University, Patiala). From the *Bhat Vahi* : "Guru Tegh Bahadur ji beta Guru Hargobind ji Mehl Chhe Guru Har Rai ji ki parchavni Karn Patna se aae; sal satrai sai unis shukla pakhe Magh mas ki panchmi ke divas tirath Pragraj Sangam te aae pahunche; gaile Mata Nanaki ji aae Mehl Guru Hargobind ji ke; Mata Hari ji aae Mehal Guru Suraj Mal ji ke; Diwan Darba Mal aaya beta Dwarka Das Chhibbar ka; hor Sikh faqir aae".
19. *Bhat Vahi Purbi Dakhni*, (Punjabi University, Patiala) and *Guru Kian Sakhian*.

### III

## TEGH BAHADUR THE GURU

Within a few days of Baba Tegn Bahadur's departure from Delhi, Guru Harkrishan Dev had a virulent attack of smallpox which was then raging in an epidemic form in the city. After only five days' illness, he breathed his last on 30 March 1664 (*Chet Sudi* 14, 1721 BK). Before the end came, the Guru beckoned to his devout Sikh Diwan Dargha Mal to produce before him forthwith five pice and a piece of *Nariyal* (cocoanut). When this was done, he raised his right arm thrice and in a low voice uttered the words, "Baba Bakala", meaning thereby that his successor would be his *Baba* (grandfather) living at the village Bakala. According to *Bhat Vahi Talauda Pargana Jind and Guru Kian Sakhian* by Sarup Singh Kaushish, the Guru did not leave any vagueness in his statement and actually mentioned the name of Baba Tegn Bahadur and instructed Diwan Dargha Mal to take the sacred *Smagri* (insignia) of Guruship to Bakala and personally offer it to the new Guru.<sup>1</sup>

Guru Harkrishan Dev's nomination of his grandfather as his successor was a unique event and brings into bold relief the principle of succession in operation under the Gurus. The first three nominations of the second, third and fourth Gurus were free from any hereditary considerations. On each of these occasions the competition was thrown open and the Guru's sons, close relatives and others could all take part in it on equal terms. The ultimate choice of the successor always fell on the man who, by test, was found to be the best of the whole lot. Thereafter, the practice changed and the scope of these competitions was restricted to the Guru's own family. Within the family, however, no restrictions were imposed. The youngest son could have as much title to



succession as the eldest. This was well proved when Guru Ram Das selected his youngest son Arjan Dev as his successor in preference to his elder sons, Prithia and Mahadev. Guru Hargobind extended the scope of the hereditary principle and by nominating a grandson in preference to his sons set up a new precedent. After him, Guru Har Rai disregarded the claim of his elder son Ram Rai and decided in favour of his younger son, Harkrishan Dev, who was at the time just a child of five years. This was again a new dimension in the situation. But the most interesting of all was the choice of Tegh Bahadur by Guru Harkrishan Dev. In making this choice he had overlooked the more immediate claims of his elder brother as well as the elder brother of his father. The only consideration weighing with him was to have the best man in the family.

The news of Guru Harkrishan Dev's passing away spread far and wide in no time but somehow the information that reached Bakala and the country around regarding the nomination of the successor was incomplete and vague, which fact gave rise to a state of confusion and uncertainty. As a result, *gurudoms* sprang up like mushrooms. All descendants of Guru Hargobind, who could venture such a claim, flocked to Bakala with their *Masands* and agents and set up their 'shops'. Sikh chronicles have mentioned as many as twenty-two *Manjis* (seats of authority meaning here *gurudoms*). Of these Dhir Mal, eldest son of Baba Gurditta, was the most conspicuous and vociferous. It was indeed a very comic scene : twenty-two pretenders each vying with others and claiming to be a successor of the Eighth Guru. But the general body of the Sikhs, the innocent sheep, were confounded; they looked up and yearned for the truth.

A few months were passed in this state of confusion, and then in the month of August (*Bhadon Amavas*, 1721 BK, 11 August 1664) a Sikh *Sangat* (congregation) from Delhi arrived in Bakala<sup>2</sup> in obedience to the late Guru's command for the installation ceremony of Guru Tegh Bahadur. The *Sangat* was headed by Diwan Dargha Mal, son of Dwarka Das Chhibbar, a prominent devotee of Guru Harkrishan Dev. *Bhat Vahi Talauda Pargana Jind* makes mention of several other eminent Sikhs who accompanied

the *Sangat* from Delhi. Some of them are : Chaupat Rai, son of Pera grandson of Gautam Chhibbar; Jetha, son of Mai Das and grandson of Ballu and great grandson of Mula; Mani Ram, son of Mai Das and grandson of Ballu; Jammu, son of Padma and grandson of Kaula; Gurbakhsh, son of Baba; Nanu, son of Baba and grandson of Umaida; and Mata Sulakhni, mother of Guru Harkrishan Dev. The aforesaid *Bhat Vahi* also refers to the presence on this occasion of Dwarka Das, son of Arjani Sahib and grandson of Baba Mohri Bhalla who was the younger son of Guru Amar Das, and Baba Gurditta Randhawa, son of Baba Budha. A mention of these two people is as well found in *Guru Kian Sakhian* by Sarup Singh Kaushish. How they happened to be there is nowhere explained, but the possibility is that special messages must have been sent to them to come to Bakala on the occasion of *Bhadron di Masya* when a big fair used to be held at the place.

The installation ceremony was held at a regular *Diwan* specially convened for the purpose. Diwan Dargha Mal informed the assemblage about the late Guru's decision regarding the nomination of Tegh Bahadur as his successor and then presented to him the five pice and one *Nariyal* he had brought from Delhi in token of the conferment of *Guruship* on him. The *Tikka* ceremony (fixing of saffron mark on the forehead) was performed by Baba Gurditta, son of Baba Budha. This was followed by all people assembled there coming up one by one and paying homage to the new Guru with what voluntary offerings he or she could conveniently make.

Normally speaking, a formal installation ceremony such as the above should have put at rest all doubts and controversies regarding the succession. But it did not yield the desired result; rather, as if stimulated by it, they became even more active and assertive and continued to misguide the unsuspecting Sikhs who happened to visit Bakala to seek the new Guru's blessings.

Unworried by what Dhir Mal and other impostors were doing and confident that truth would ultimately prevail, Guru Tegh Bahadur went about his work in the normal way. Ten days after his accession, on *Bhadon Sudi 10* (August 21), he went to Kiratpur to condole with Bibi Roop Kaur over the deaths of her father,

Guru Har Rai and her brother, Guru Harkrishan Dev. According to *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi and Guru Kian Sakhian*<sup>4</sup>, he was accompanied during this journey by Baba Dwarka Das son of Baba Arjani Sahib, Diwan Dargha Mal son of Dwarka Das Chhibbar, and Jaggu son of Padma. The visit synchronized with the holy ceremony of immersion of the late Guru's ashes in the waters of the Satluj on 22 August.

Exactly two months after the installation ceremony, on the occasion of Diwali festival (9 October 1664), a very important event took place at Bakala, which nearly brought to an end the acrimonious controversy regarding the question of succession. This was the coming of one Makhan Shah<sup>5</sup> Lubana with a view to meeting the Guru and, by way of thanks giving, making an offering to him of a certain previously pledged sum of money. With him were his two sons, Lal Chand and Chandu Lal, and his wife, Soljai. He was a rich trader with a large convoy of horses, bullocks, camels and carts, carrying tents and goods, guarded by a strong body of armed men. His main business was to supply provisions to moving Mughal armies by land, river and sea routes. Only recently a ship carrying him and his goods was caught up in a storm. His life and goods were in great danger. In this hour of difficulty he prayed to God and Guru Nanak to help him to safety. He vowed that if he escaped the apprehended shipwreck, he would donate to the Guru 101 gold mohurs<sup>6</sup>. His prayer was answered and he was in a mood of thankfulness for the divine mercy bestowed on him. He had first gone to Delhi but hearing that Guru Harkrishan Dev had passed away and that his successor was at Bakala, he had arrived here. But he was greatly bewildered to see a whole contingent of Gurus, each one of them claiming that he alone was the true Guru whereas all others were mere imposters.

Makhan Shah, however, was a clever man. He decided to visit all the Gurus one by one and to offer two gold mohurs to each one of them. He was convinced in his heart of hearts that the true Guru would not be satisfied with just two gold mohurs but would ask for the entire amount. And so he went round and did as planned before. When in the end he made his offering to Guru Tegh

Bahadur, he found the desired reaction. He was mighty pleased when the Guru reminded him of his pledge and asked for the entire amount of 101 gold *mohurs*. Immediately, he made the offering in full and ascending to the top of the house, with the flourish of a piece of cloth, shouted aloud : "I have found the Guru ! I have found the Guru ! !" (*Guru Ladho re ! Guru Ladho re !!*). Hearing his shouts, people assembled around him in large numbers, all attention and most anxious to learn from him how he had made the discovery. His dramatic story carried conviction to the vast crowd gathered there.

This happening brought about considerable improvement in the overall situation at Bakala and all but Dhir Mal bowed before the public opinion and left for their respective places. Dhir Mal was made of a different stuff. He was so arrogant and self-conceited that he was not prepared to take it lying down. He now planned to seize by force what he had failed to achieve by trickery. He hatched a conspiracy with the help of his *Masand*, Shihan. Weapons were collected and a band of about 100 ruffians was organized for the evil purpose of attacking Guru Tegh Bahadur and plundering his *Durbar*. One day at about noon when Makhan Shah with his men had retired to his camp for lunch and the Guru was left only with a few people, Shihan and his armed men launched the attack.<sup>7</sup> Shihan himself aimed a bullet at Guru Tegh Bahadur and fired point-blank, but the bullet missed the target and just scratched the surface of the Guru's shoulder<sup>8</sup>. One of the devoted Sikhs of the Guru present there took a plunge upon Shihan and forcibly seized his matchlock before he could fire the second round. In the meantime, Shihan's men had helped themselves with all the valuable property of the Guru's *Durbar*. The whole operation was conducted under the very eye of the wicked-minded Dhir Mal. When Makhan Shah and his men learnt about the attack, they hastened back but by the time of their arrival on the scene, the rogues had escaped with their booty. There was a wave of indignation in the Guru's camp and after hurried consultations it was decided to make a counterattack.<sup>9</sup> Dhir Mal, Shihan and their ruffians could not stand the onslaught. They were routed and their

leaders were captured. Besides, lost of materials were got hold of from Dhir Mal's house and carried to the Guru's *Durbar*. When Guru Tegh Bahadur had a close look at them, he felt distressed to find among them many things which did not belong to his *Durbar*. He at once ordered that all such goods must forthwith be restored to Dhir Mal. The orders had to be carried out though many of the Guru's followers, including Makhan Shah, were in favour of their retention. The prisoners were also pardoned and released. After this it was impossible for Dhir Mal to stay any longer at Bakala and he stealthily returned to his original headquarters, Kartarpur. Thus did ultimately the truth prevail.

Not long after, Guru Tegh Bahadur decided to move out of Bakala. With his accession to *Gurgaddi*, a new sense of responsibility had dawned upon him. He felt it necessary to quit his Bhora (meditation cell) and to go out among the people to deliver his message of truth and love. He began by making a visit to Amritsar, the most sacred place of the Sikhs. He arrived there on the full-moon day (*Puranmashi*) of the month of Maghar (November 22, 1664), a month and half after the Diwali fair of Bakala. Notable among those who accompanied him were Dwarka Das son of Arjani Sahib Bhalla, Diwan Dargha Mal son of Dwarka Das Chhibbar, and Makhan Shah Labana son of Dasa<sup>10</sup>.

There are two different versions of what happened to Guru Tegh Bahadur at Amritsar. According to the evidence of *Bhat Vahi Tumar Bijlauton ki* and *Guru Kian Sakhian* by Sarup Singh Kaushish<sup>11</sup>, no untoward event came to pass on this occasion and Harji, son and successor of Baba Meharban and the then custodian of Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar, along with his son Kanwal Nain and the local *Sangat*, came round and made obeisance before Guru Tegh Bahadur and personally took him inside the premises of the temple. The other version is that, as soon as Guru Tegh Bahadur entered the holy city, the Mina Sodhi Guru, Harji, out of rivalry, ordered the closing of all entrances leading into the premises of Harmandir Sahib. Thereupon the Guru fixed up his camp just behind the Akal Bunga and waited for the doors to open. The place where he stayed is now marked by Gurdwara

Thara (also Tham) Sahib. When he saw no change of heart on the part of the Mina Guru, he departed and made his stay just outside the city where Gurdwara Damdama Sahib stands now. Here, it is said, a large number of the citizens of Amritsar waited upon him and atoning for the misconduct of the priests implored him to return and visit the Harmandir and the holy tank which in his graciousness he ultimately agreed to do. It is also stated that at this place a large number of women from the city came along and served *langar* (free food) to the Guru and his entire *Sangat*. Much pleased with their dedicated service, he blessed them saying "*Maiyan Rab Rajaiyan*" (O' Laides, you are blessed by God). This was in happy contrast to what he had earlier said about some of the men of the city who had shown petty-mindedness by shutting unto him the doors of Harmandir Sahib.

As to which of these two versions is correct and which is false, it is not easy to say. But it may be that Harji was acting with two faces : (i) outwardly he wanted to keep up the appearances and to give the impression that he had no ill will at heart toward Guru Tegh Bahadur, whereas (ii) inwardly he bore malice and gave secret instructions to his agents to prevent him from stepping on the holy premises of Harmandir Sahib.

From here Guru Tegh Bahadur and his party made a brief visit to a nearby village Walla<sup>13</sup> at the earnest request of a few devotees from there. One of these devotees was a pious peasant woman called Hariyan. She begged the Guru to spend a night in her humble cottage, placing at his disposal as well as of the congregation everything that she possessed.

Leaving Amritsar, Guru Tegh Bahadur decided to spend a few months touring the Majha and Malwa areas before proceeding to Kiratpur. Majha had already developed into a major centre of Sikhism on account of the hard work done by the first five successors of Guru Nanak. As for Malwa, the sixth and seventh Gurus had done good initial work and the Sikh faith had gained a firm foothold there, showing bright prospects for its further progress in future. No wonder then that Guru Tegh Bahadur and after him, his son and successor, Guru Gobind Singh, concentrated on the region making it into a principal stronghold of Sikhism.

The Guru with all his entourage, after his departure from Amritsar,<sup>14</sup> wended his way through the heartland of the Majha and on the way probably made brief visits to Khadur Sahib, Goindwal and Tarn Taran. Last of all, he reached Khem Karan, a small town now in the extreme west of Amritsar District. Here at this place one Kamboj Chaudhari Raghpat Rai, out of devotion, presented a mare to the Guru. As was to be expected, large numbers of country people flocked to him for his blessings and had the good fortune of benefiting from his teachings.

After travelling accross the Majha, Guru Tegh Bahadur crossed the river Satluj and entered the Malwa from the side of the modern town of Ferozepur. He was soon in the midst of the Lakhi Jungle by which name was called the entire arid and sparsely populated tract of land now broadly covering the districts of Faridkot and Bhatinda. Here in this area there are a large number of villages bearing the tradition of having been honoured by the holy presence of the Guru. Talwandi Sabo, Maur and Maisar Khana are but a few of the many such places sanctified by the Master's sacred feet. However, for lack of definite evidence, it is difficult to ascertain which of them were visited at this time and which on subsequent occasions.

After the Malwa the Guru entered the Bangar area and reached Dhamdhan<sup>15</sup> on the occasion of Baisakhi. There lived a *Masand* named Bhai Daggo. He served the Guru and his party during their stay with complete devotion. Guru Tegh Bahadur liked the place and thought of developing it into a centre of Sikhism. In view of this he gave some money to the *Masand* and instructed him to raise a building with a well for water supply and to desilt the tank nearby, named by him as Gurusar<sup>16</sup>. After spending a few days here, the Guru left for Kiratpur and reached there in May 1665 (around 9 *Jeth*, 1722 BK).

On his arrival at Kiratpur Guru Tegh Bahadur was informed that Raja Dip Chand of Bilaspur had passed away and that his *Satarvin* (a ceremony performed on the 17th day from death) was due on 15 *Jeth*, 1722 BK (13 May 1665). To this function Guru Tehg Bahadur and other connected with him were invited through

a special messenger by the widowed queen, Rani Champa. The invitation was accepted and a large number of men and women from Kiratpur attended the function with the Guru at the head of the party. *Bhat Vahi Purbi Dakhni*<sup>17</sup> mentions the names of some of the people who went to Bilaspur on this occasion. They are : Mata Nanaki, Mata Hari (Baba Suraj Mal's wife), Mata Sulakhni (Guru Har Rai's wife), Dip Chand and Nand Chand (sons of Baba Suraj Mal), Diwan Dargha Mal (son of Dwarka Das Chibbar), Jetha and Dayal Das (son of Mai Das). Durga Das (son of Padma Rai Hajabat) and Dariya (son of Mula Jalhan).

Rani Champa received Guru Tegh Bahadur with full honours and did all that she could to make his 3 days' stay as comfortable as possible. Guru Tegh Bahadur took the opportunity of disclosing to the Rani his plan of building a new settlement somewhere near Kiratpur and offered to buy a suitable place of land in the State of Kehlur. In response to this, the Rani consulted her ministers and offered the site of Makhawal for this purpose. The Guru was pleased with the spirit of devotion in which the offer was made but he preferred to buy it and volunteered a certain sum (Rs. 500/- according to some accounts) for it. But the Rani was not willing to accept any monetary consideration for her land offer. Ultimately, a compromise was made and the Rani agreed to accept a token amount<sup>18</sup>.

On returning to Kiratpur, Guru Tegh Bahadur instructed Diwan Dargha Mal to make a careful survey of the land and determine the exact site where the foundation-stone of the new *Basti* was to be laid. This completed, 21 *Har*, 1722 BK (19 June 1665 A.D.) was fixed for the foundation-stone ceremony. The ceremony was performed by Baba Gurditta Randhawa, son of Baba Budha and the new *Basti* was named Chak Nanaki after the revered name of the Guru's mother.<sup>19</sup> This humble beginning served as nucleus for the beautiful town of Anandpur which subsequently grew up around it.



*References and Foot Notes :*

1. *Bhat Vahi Talauda Pargana Jind* (Punjabi University, Patiala). Corroborative evidence is found in *Guru Kian Sakhian* (ms). From the *Bhat Vahi* :  
 "Guru Harkrishan ji Mehl Athvan beta Guru Har Rai ji ka Surajbansi Gosal gotra Sodhi khatri sal 1721 Chet mase sudi chaudah Budhvar ke dihon panch paise nalyar mangai tin bar dain bhuja bhamai dhimi avaj se bachan kiya ke mera Baba Tegh Bahadur Bakala Wala ko asan ke piche Guru janana jo janega Guru tis ki bahuri karega age Guru ji ki gat Guru jane."
2. *Bhat Vahi Talauda Pargana Jind-Khata Jalhana Balauton ka* (Punjabi University, Patiala).  
 Form the *Bhat Vahi* :  
 "Diwan Dargha Mal beta Dwarka Das Chhibbar ka pota Prag Das ka parpota Gautam ka, Chaupat Rai beta Pere ka pota Gautam Chhibbar ka, Jetha beta Mai Das pota Balu ka parpota Mule ka, Mani Ram beta Mai Das ka pota Balu ka, Jammu beta Padme ka pota Kaule ka parpota Ambia ka, Gurbakhsh beta Babe ka, Nanu beta Babe ka pote Umaide ke, Dilli se Guru Harkrishan ji Mehl Athvan ki Mata Sulakhni ke sath Bakala aae; sal satrai sai ikis mah Bhadva ki amavas Shukarvar ke dihon Guru Tegh Bahadur ji Mehl Name ko Guru Dwarka Das beta Guru Arjani Sahib ka pota Guru Mohri ka ki agya pae Baba Gurditta ji ne Guryai ka Tikka kiya."  
 It may be noted that the immersion of the mortal remains of the late Guru in the waters of the Ganga at Hardwar was performed (vide *Bhat Vahi Talauda Pargana Jind*) on 13 may 1664 by Mata Sulakhni, Baba Ram Rai and Diwan Dargha Mal. It was after this that preparations were set afoot for the installation ceremony of the next Guru.
3. *Guru Kian Sakhian* (ms).
4. *Ibid.*, *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi* (Punjabi University, Patiala). From the *Bhat Vahi* :  
 "Guru Tegh Bahadur ji Mehl Nama beta Guru Hargobind ji ka pota Guru Arjan ji ka parpota Guru Ram Das ji ka bans Baba Thakur Das ji ki Surajbansi Gosal gotra basi Bakala ke Kiratput aae Pargana Kehlor, sal satrai se ikis Bhadva sudi Dasvin ke dihon Bhai Khem Karan Puse Khatri ke ghar Bibi Roop Koer ko bulan, sath Guru Dwarka Das aaya beta Guru Arjani Sahib Bhalla, Diwan Dargha Mal aaya beta Dwarka Das Chhibbar ka, sath Jammu aaya beta Padme ka."  
 Also see *Bhat Vahi Talauda Pargana Jind* (Punjabi University, Patiala).
5. According to *Bhat Vahi Tumar Bijlouton ki*, Makhan Shah was son of Dasa, grandson of Artha, great-grandson of Banna, a descendant of Bahorhu. Makhan Shah was Pelia by caste and belonged to village Tanda in Pargana Muzaffrabad (Kashmir) :  
 "Makhan Shah beta Dase ka pota Arthe ka.....Lal Chand Makhan Shah ka Chandu Lal Makhan Shah ka Soljai istri Makhan Shah ki.....sal

satrai sai ikis ki Diwali Shanivar ke dihon Bakala gaon me aaya. Guru Tegh Bahadur ji Mehl Name ke durbar ikotar sau mohur bheta ki. Sath Dhuma Naik aaya beta Kanhe Bijluat ka."

6. *Guru Kian Sakhian* mentions only 101 gold *mohurs*. *Bhat Vahi Tamar Bijlauton ki* gives the same figure. However, the popular tradition refers to 500 *mohurs*.
7. The earliest reference to this incident is, perhaps, found in Kesar Singh Chhibbar's *Bansavali Nama*. But it is very brief. The first elaborate account of this happening is given in Bhai Santokh Singh's *Suraj Prakash*. The example of Santokh Singh was followed by later writers such as Gyan Singh and Macauliffe. Some of our modern writers like Dr G. S. Anand have doubted the historicity of this on the ground that it is not mentioned in earlier writings like *Mehma Prakash* by Sarup Das Bhalla. But this seems too flimsy a ground to rule out the possibility of this event.
8. There is difference of opinion on this point. The author of *Suraj Prakash* mentions that the bullet caused injury to the head. Gyan Singh in his *Twariikh Guru Khalsa* writes that the bullet did not cause any injury to the Guru but killed a disciple who was standing beside him. Some other accounts refer to the shoulder injury. Anyhow, the injury was not serious, as the Guru not long after left for Amritsar.
9. There is some difference of opinion on this point as well. According to *Suraj Prakash*, Dhir Mal was attacked before he left for Kartarpur, but according to Gyan Singh he had already left for Kartarpur and was overtaken by hot chase.
10. *Bhat Vahi Tumar Bijlauton ki* and *Guru Kian Sakhian* (ms). From the *Bhat Vahi* :  
 "Guru Tegh Bahadur ji Mehl Nama beta Guru Hargobind ji ka pota Guru Arjan ji ka parpota Guru Ram Das ji ka.....sal satrai sai ikis Mangsar ki Purnma ke dihon Guru Chak ke Malhan Pargana Ajnala aae; sath Guru Dwarka Das beta Guru Arjani Sahib Bhalla ka, Diwan Dargha Mal beta Dwarka Das Chhibbar ka, Makhan Shah beta Dase ka Pelia Banjara, hor Sikh fakir aae. Guru ji ne Sri Durbar Sahib aage ek uche chabutre te asan laya; Satgur ka Guru ki Nagri aana sun Guru Har ji beta Guru Manohar ji ka parpota Guru Prithi Chand ji ka Bans Guru Ram Das ji ki Mehl Chauthe ki sangat ko gail lai darshan pane aaye."
11. *Ibid*.
12. Pandit Tara Singh Narotam, *Gurtirath Sangrah*, p. 75; Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. IV, p. 337; *Suraj Prakash*, Ras II, Ansu 22.
13. The village is about four miles to the north of Amritsar. There are two shrines commemorating the visit of Guru Tegh Bahadur, one on the outskirts of the village and the other inside the village. The descendants of Mai Hariyan are still living in the village.
14. Dr Trilochan Singh, Dr G. S. Anand and some other writers have written that from Amritsar the Guru made a bee-line for Kiratpur. This is unaccept-

able in view of the evidence of *Guru Kian Sakhian* that the date of his arrival at Kiratpur was 9 *Jeth*, 1772 BK. (7 May, 1665). Had it been so, it would not have taken the Guru five months to cover the distance from Amritsar to Kiratpur. Moreover, when he visited the Malwa in 1673-74, there were many Sikhs already in the area who had known him previously. This points to an earlier visit to the area on his part.

15. An important village, about a mile to the south-west of the Dhamdhan Railway Station, formerly in the State of Patiala. The historic *Gurdwara* commemorating the visits of Guru Tegh Bahadur is situated to the north of the village. The *Gurdwara* was built by Maharaja Karam Singh and enjoys a handsome land *Jagir* of over 707 acres.
16. *Malwa Desh Rattan di Sakhi Pothi*, Sakhi 33 (Amritsar, January 1968).
17. *Bhat Vahi Purbi Dakhni Khata Jalhana* (Punjabi University, Patiala).

From the *Bhat Vahi* :

"Guru Tegh Bahadur ji Mehl Nama.....basi Kiratpur Pargana Kehlor-Bilaspur aae Rani Champa ke bulave te, Raja Dip Chand beta Raja Tara Chand ki Starvin te, sal satrai sai baais Jeth parbishte Pandras Mangalvar ke dihon; gaile Mata Nanaki ji aae Mata Guru Tegh Bahadur ji ki, Mata Hari ji aae istri Guru Suraj Mal ji ki, Mata Sulakhni ji aae istri Guru Har Rai ji ki, Sri Dip Chand, Nand Chand aae bete Guru Suraj Mal ji ke, Dewan Dargha Mal aaya beta Dwarka Das Chhibbar ka, Jetha, Dayal Das aae bete Mai Das Jalhane ke, Durga Das aaya beta Padam Rai Hajabat ka, Darya aaya beta Mule Jalhane ka, hor Sikh fakir aae. Rani Champa ne Guru ji ka bara aao bhagat kiya, nama gam basane ke liye Lodipur, Miyanpur Sahode gaman ki bhoen di, tin dihon Guru ji Champa ke grah me reh ke bapas Kiratpur aae gae."

18. *Bhat Vahi Purbi Dakhni Khata Jalhana*.

The statement of the *Bhat Vahi* is somewhat vague. It may even mean a free gift but does not rule out the possibility of paying for it. The general view, however, is very clear. The *Hoshiarpur District Gazetteer* says that this land was purchased from the Raja of Bilaspur. This is also the view of Bhai Santokh Singh, Bhai Sukha Singh and Giani Gian Singh. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh in their *A Short History of the Sikhs*, page 52, say that Guru Tegh Bahadur paid Rs. 500/- for it. But they have not given their source of information. Therefore, we may conclude that some payment was made though we cannot say what it was exactly.

19. *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi Khata Jalhana Bijlauton ka; Guru Kian Sakhian*, Sakhi 22.

From the *Bhat Vahi* :

"Guru Tegh Bahadur ji Mehl Nama.....basi Kiratpur pargana Kehlor sal satrai sai baais Asar parbishte ikis Somvar ke dihon Makhawal gram ke theh te Baba Gurditta ji Randhaba bans Baba Budha ji ke dast mubarak se naven gram ki morhi gadhi, naon Chak Nanaki rakha, Guru ki karahi ki."

#### IV

### EASTERN TOURS

Various explanations have been advanced for Guru Tegh Bahadur's decision to go on the eastern tours. The foundation-stone of Chak Nanaki had been laid only recently and it was naturally expected that the Guru would have a prolonged stay there and would personally watch the growth of the new settlement. But this was not done. On the other hand he appointed a few trustworthy devotees of his to look after the construction work and himself hurriedly left on travels. What was the reason for that ? One explanation given is that he wanted to get away from the scene of his collaterals' rivalries and machinations. But this seems inadequate for the reason that except for Dhir Mal of Kartarpur and Harji of Amritsar who too had been brought to kness, there was none actively hostile to him. Rather, Dip Chand and Nand Chand, both sons of Baba Suraj Mal, elder brother of Guru Tegh Bahadur, had attended his installation ceremony at Bakala held in August 1664 and later in May 1665 had accompanied him to Bilaspur to own attend the *Starvin* function of the late Raja Dip Chand of that State.<sup>1</sup> That also may speak for Baba Suraj Mal's own attitude towards Guru Tegh Bahadur. Another explanation advanced is that he had to undertake the tour at the special invitation of some Sikhs from the east, namely Bhai Balaki Das and Bhai Hulas Chand from Dacca and Bhai Darbari and Bhai Chain Sukh from Patna.<sup>2</sup> Adducing the argument, Dr Trilochan Singh says that they had a meeting with the Guru at Kirtarpur and begged him to "come with his family and major portion of the Darbar." But in support of this contention no evidence has been given by him. According to

another explanation the Guru went to Dhamdhan (Bangar Desh) to fetch some of his luggage he had left there during his earlier visit to the place. There he was arrested by the Mughals and taken to Delhi and produced before Emperor Aurangzeb. Then, Raja Ram Singh of Amber, a devotee of the Sikh Gurus, interceded with the Emperor and got the Guru released. From there the Guru departed towards the east on the advice of Raja Ram Singh. This explanation, too, appears inadequate for the reason that, if accepted, it will mean that the Guru had no set programme of his own and travelled as demanded by his circumstances. Moreover, the underlying idea here again is the belief that Punjab was not a safe place for the Guru to stay in, which does not appear to be correct.

There are two other possible reasons given which, comparatively, stand on a much sounder footing. One is that the Guru during his earlier tour in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar had personally seen the functioning of Sikh *Sangats* in those areas. He had undertaken the journey then not so much for missionary work as for *tirath-yatra* (visiting of sacred places). But the experience had proved beneficial and had convinced him of their dedication and attachment to the cause of Sikhism. At the same time he had felt the need of further strengthening the bonds with them and also of answering their general grouse that much attention was not being paid to them. The second of these explanations is of a personal character but nonetheless a plausible one, or at least one deserving of serious attention. The Guru had left his wife Gujri and his brother-in-law Kirpal Chand at Patna<sup>3</sup> and had returned to Punjab only temporarily for the purpose of offering condolence on the death of the Seventh Guru, Har Rai. The stay in Punjab had become longer than expected because meanwhile certain new developments had taken place. However, the moment he felt free from his more urgent affairs, he undertook the return journey. After his return to Patna the programme expanded and he had to travel as far eastward as Bengal and Assam.

Whatever may be the reasons of the new undertaking, Guru Tegh Bahadur set out on his outward journey some time after the

foundation-laying ceremony of Chak Nanaki. This time there were probably no ladies with him. Mata Nanaki preferred to stay behind and soon after went back to her parents' home at Bakala. Mata Gurjri was already at Patna. But the Guru had many of his staunch devotees accompanying him, such as Sati Das, Mati Das, Gawal Das, Gurdas, Sangat, Jetha and Dayal Das. They marched in a leisurely manner and after brief halts at Ropar and Saifabad<sup>4</sup> (near modern Patiala) they reached Dhamdhan in the Bangar area. This was Guru Tegh Bahadur's second visit to the place. As remarked before, he had liked the place immensely during his previous visit and wanted to develop it into a major centre of Sikhism in the Bangar area. At least this is the impression which one gets from reading the accounts of his visit to the place recorded in *Malwa Desh Rattan di Sakhi Pothi*<sup>5</sup>. There is a very significant hint that before departing from Dhamdhan to Kiratpur, the Guru had instructed the local *Masand*, Bhai Daggo, to raise a *Gurdwara* and to sink a well outside it and for this purpose had advanced to him a good amount of money. The *Masand* in the meantime had constructed the building and even sunk the well. But there were complaints that he had deviated from the instructions. It is very probable that the Guru's idea in coming over here once again was to see for himself the progress of his projects under the supervision of Bhai Daggo and to set things right.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's arrival at Dhamdhan must be sometime prior to Diwali because the day was celebrated by organizing a fair attended by large crowds of people from the neighbouring villages. This over, the Guru waited for the *Katik Purnamashi* to celebrate the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak. This occasion, too, was to be marked by a vast assembly of people from the country around.

However, four days before that great occasion arrived, Alam Khan Rohila suddenly appeared with imperial orders from Delhi and arrested him. The exact date of his arrest as mentioned in *Bhat Vahi* was *Katik Sudi II*, 1772 BK<sup>7</sup> (8 November 1665). Arrested along with him were Bhai Sati Das, Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Gawal Das (son of Chhote Mal Chhibbar), Bhai Gurdas (son of

Kirat Barhtia), Sangat (son of Binna Uppal), Jetha, Dayal Das and several other leading Sikhs in attendance upon the Guru . According to the author of *Mehma Prakash*, the arrests were effected when the Guru in company with many of his Sikhs was out a hunting.<sup>8</sup> Interestingly and significantly, we find valuable corroborative evidence forth is happening in one of the Assam *Buranjis*.<sup>9</sup> Further, this external contemporary source supplies an insight into the causes that might have led to the arrests. According to it orthodox Brahmins and Ulemas were feeling greatly upset over the powerful impact of the Guru's teachings on the people at large and they complained to the Emperor that he was vitiating the whole atmosphere. Thereupon, the Emperor issued orders that the Guru should appear before him. When the Guru paid no heed to this and continued his work as usual, the Emperor commissioned Alo (Alam) Khan Pathan to apprehend him, which he did. The *Buranji* account refers to 30,000 *Nanakpanthi Sipahis* assembled with the Guru. Obviously, there are some inaccuracies in this account, which may be explained by the long distance which intervened between the place of recording and that of actual happening. Still the basic idea of this account cannot be ruled out. The vast crowds that had assembled at Dhamdhan on the occasion of Diwali, as also the large following of the Guru and his frequent hunting expeditions, are believed to have caused misgivings about him in official headquarters, which ultimately became responsible for the arrest of the Guru and his Sikhs.<sup>10</sup>

On being produced before Emperor Aurangzeb at Delhi Guru Tegh Bahadur was strictly examined and then handed over to Raja Ram Singh of Amber (son of Mirza Raja Jai Singh of Amber) for custody. According to the Assam *Buranji*<sup>11</sup>, the Emperor was furious and even ordered the execution of the Guru. Raja Ram Singh, however, successfully interceded with the Emperor and calmed down his wrath by taking full responsibility for the Guru's conduct. He impressed upon the Emperor's mind that the Guru was a great saint and that it did not behave His Majesty to inflict punishment on him.

*Bhat Vahi Jodobansian* informs us that Guru Tegh Bahadur remained in custody for a period of about one month after which

he was released on *Poh I*, 1772 BK.<sup>12</sup> ( 13 December 1665) and allowed to go wherever he wanted. Shortly after, the Guru set out on his interrupted eastern journey.

As soon as the news of the Guru's departure was reported to the Emperor, he disapproved of Raja Ram Singh's conduct in releasing the Guru. This is made clear in the account given in *Badshah Buranji*<sup>13</sup>. The Emperor's contention was that Raja Ram Singh had violated the terms of the custody by setting him free. On account of this the Raja to an extent fell out of grace. His good faith with the Emperor was further jeopardised by the escape of Shivaji and his son Sambhaji from his custody in the Agra fort a few months later.

Resuming the journey eastward, Guru Tegh Bahadur followed almost the same route as he had done during his previous travels. The journey from Delhi to Patna, *interalia*, lay through Mathura, Agra, Etawah, Kanpur, Fatehpur, Banaras, Sasaram and Gaya. Practically all of these places had Sikh *Sangats* functioning in them and the Guru had already established his contacts with them. The membership of these *Sangats* was mostly drawn from the migrant trading communities of the Punjab and as such between them and the Sikh Gurus were forged strong bonds of affinity and attachment.

The first important place the Guru reached after Delhi was Mathura. There he made a brief sojourn which is commemorated by a historical *Gurdwara* raised at the place of his stay. During his halt here he also made a brief visit to Brindaban but there is no memorial there marking his visit. Agra was the next important halting station. Whether now or previously, he stayed in the house of one old pious lady, Mai Jassi by name, in Mai Than *Mohalla* of the city, and in memory of that we have now the historic shrine called Gurdwara Mai Than. Starting from Agra the Guru passed through several important towns such as Etawah, Kanpur and Fatehpur and then reached Prayag (modern Allahabad). In the absence of any definite evidence, it is very difficult to say exactly when he arrived at this place. But some conjecturing may be made in this respect and it may be said that it could not be earlier than



the beginning of March 1666. The place where the Guru stayed is now marked by Gurdwara Pakki Sangat.

After Prayag came Banaras where, too, he stayed for many days. Like the other places, he had visited Banaras before more than once and felt quite at home among his devotees, chief among whom was Bhai Jawahri Mal. By the local tradition the white horse, Sri Dhar, gifted to him by Saif Khan of Saifabad, fell ill and subsequently met his death at Banaras. A dark brown dress of the Rajput style, believed to be the clothes the Guru was wearing at the time of his entering the city, is still preserved there. Here in the Resham Kutra, there stands a shrine associated with the memory of his visit, called Shabad ka Kotha (Mansion of the Word).

From Banaras Guru Tegh Bahadur moved on to Sasaram where Chacha Phagu served him and his people with complete devotion. He lodged the Master in a beautiful new house which has since become a holy shrine and is called Chacha Phagu's Sangat.<sup>14</sup> The next important stage in the journey was Bodh Gaya. The Guru halted on the bank of the river Phalgu near the Devghat. The place of his stay is now marked by a historical *Gurdwara*. An Udasi Sadhu, Mahant Ram Das, residing here rendered great service to the Guru and his people during their stay.

After Bodh Gaya came Patna which was reached towards the end of May 1666.<sup>15</sup> The rainy months, June to September, when communications are rendered difficult by floods in rivers, were spent at Patna. Hearing about the Guru's arrival, the faithful flocked to him in large numbers every day. Bhai Jetha's house where the Guru took up his residence to start with, proved too small to accommodate the ever increasing numbers and therefore the Guru had to shift to Bhai Baisakhi Ram's *Haveli* which was much bigger. Even this was subsequently found to be too small to serve the purpose and the place of congregation was re-shifted to the site where now stands Sri Harmandir Sahib. Sometime around the Dussehra festival, a few prominent Sikhs of Dacca waited upon the Guru and entreated him to visit and bless their area as well. The Guru was much impressed by their sentiments of love and devotion and he agreed to go with them at once, entrusting his family to the care of his Patna *Sangat*.<sup>16</sup>

While staying at Patna, Guru Tegh Bahadur took pains to co-ordinate the missionary work in this region by placing all *Sangats* of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh under the unified command of Bhai Dayal Das who by dint of sincerity, ability and devotion had risen so high in the estimation of the Guru. This fact becomes apparent from the perusal of Guru Tegh Bahadur's *Hukamnamas* despatched from various places.<sup>17</sup>

Once the decision of proceeding on to Dacca was announced, Guru Tegh Bahadur did not take long to get ready for the journey, arduous though it was. The road that he followed ran along the bank of the Ganga. Among the prominent disciples who accompanied him were Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das and Baba Gurditta son of Baba Budha. On the way to Monghyr, the Guru and his followers made brief halts at numerous places including the small town of Barh where we have definite evidence showing that a historical *Gurdwara* called Gurdwara Bari Sangat<sup>18</sup> used to exist and was looked after by a Nanakpanthi named Bhai Udo as late as 1723 A.D. However, nowadays there is nothing of the sort there.

At Monghyr, about 105 miles from Patna, the Guru had a much longer stay. The sojourn here is particularly notable for some of the letters (*Hukamnamas*) are believed to have been despatched from here to the *Sangats* of Patna and Banaras.<sup>19</sup>

From Monghyr Guru Tegh Bahadur marched forward to Bhagalpur and thence to Colgong, Sahibganj and Kantnagar. The last-named place was subsequently wiped out by floods and the inhabitants moved to a new site towards the north, now known as Lachmipur. A number of villages in this area of Bihar are still predominantly Sikh. Although this dress is Bihari and their language is Maithili, they have retained Sikh traditions and practices up to date. The memory of the Guru's visit is still fresh in the minds of the people and pertaining to that many legends are still current among them.

From Kantnagar the Guru moved on to the great *Sufi* centre, Malda, well known for its *Pirs* and *Fakirs*. Here the Guru is believed to have stayed for more than a month during which he

had exchange of ideas on many religious problems. The Muslim saints were deeply impressed by the charismatic personality of Guru Tegh Bahadur.

From Malda the Guru set out for Dacca, about 250 miles from there. On the way, among others, he passed through such places as Godagari, Gopalpur and Pabna. The exact date of his arrival in Dacca is not known and about this some widely varying guesses have been attempted.<sup>20</sup> At the most it may be said that the arrival there was towards the middle of 1667 A.D.

Dacca was at the time perhaps the most important city of East India. Sikh association with it was as old as the founder of the Sikh faith, Guru Nanak. During his short stay at Dacca in early 16th century, Guru Nanak, as the local tradition goes, visited the site of the present Rayer Bazar Gurdwara located in the area of Dhanmandi. Quite close to it there used to be a well where the Guru stayed and that has since been known as the sacred well of Nanak and its water is believed to be possessing curative properties.<sup>21</sup> Later, the Third Guru, Amar Das, sent missionaries to this region who organized *Sangats* at various places. Still later, under Guru Hargobind, Almast son of Hardat, a Kashmiri Pandit from Srinagar,<sup>22</sup> was commissioned by Baba Gurditta, eldest son of Guru Hargobind to reorganize the *Udasi* missionary organization of Baba Sri Chand. Almast visited all these places and appointed devoted *Udasi Sadhus* to propagate the teachings of Guru Nanak. At the time of Guru Tegh Bahadur's visit, Bhai Natha, a disciple and successor of Bhai Almast, was the head of the *Udasi sect* at Dacca. Another important Sikh at Dacca at that time was Bhai Bulaki who was the local *Masand* and supreme head of the *Sangats* of Bengal, including that of the city of Dacca.

Bhai Bulaki was an active worker and carried excellent reputation for his piety, fervour, and integrity. His mother, quite old at the time, had been yearning for the Guru's *darshan* ever since she had learnt that he was on his way to Dacca. The entire Dacca *Sangat* was overjoyed to have in their midst the most revered object of their hearts, the Guru in his very flesh and blood. The news of his arrival in Dacca spread in no time to the other Sikh

*Sangats* of Bengal, such as those of Sylhet, Sondip and Chittagong, and numerous devotees from all of them began to flock to the Guru's *Durbar* in ever growing numbers. The place where he held his *Durbar* is marked by a *Gurdwara* called Sangat Tola Gurdwara. Tradition has it that a big *Jagir* was later assigned to it by Nawab Shaista Khan, the then Mughal governor of Bengal, in token of his goodwill towards the Sikh *Sangat*. However, there is no reliable record of this *Jagir* available.<sup>23</sup>

Guru Tegh Bahadur's stay at Dacca presumably lasted for about a year. There is no sure proof to show that during this period he moved out of Dacca and visited other Sikh *Sangats* of Bengal but such a possibility may not be ruled out. He had proceeded there for the specific purpose of meeting his *Sangats* and it would be rather too much to assume that he stayed all the time at one and the same place, Dacca. However, till the matter is further explored and new evidence is found, we are not in a position to say much on the subject.

Around the middle of 1668 the Guru completed his visit and set out on the homeward journey. Probably, he reached Patna and spent sometime with his family before moving out again but we are not yet sure of this. Anyhow, he was out, travelling somewhere in the neighbourhood of Monghyr when the Amber Rajput Chief, Raja Ram Singh,<sup>24</sup> met Guru Tegh Bahadur. He was commanding a strong Mughal army and was on his way to Assam. The march was directed against the Ahom ruler who had defeated the Mughals and driven them out of Gauhati. Aurangzeb, it is said, had put Raja Ram Singh in charge of expedition with a sinister motive,<sup>25</sup> as it was fraught with great dangers. Hazards of climate combined with those of sorcery for which the land of Kamrup was so notorious, had caused a terror in the minds of not merely the rank and file of the Mughal forces but also its commanders. The death of Mir Jumla, Commander of the previous Assam expedition in 1665, was by common belief attributed to this perilous combination. In full consciousness of these dangers, Raja Ram Singh had thought of engaging from Malda on the way five *Pirs* regarded as experts in the black arts. Still when he met Guru Tegh

Bahadur, he made an humble appeal to him to give his protecting hand and to go with him to Assam. The appeal was accepted and they left for Dacca together enroute to Assam sometime towards the close of the third quarter of 1668 A.D.

Entering Assam sometime towards the end of 1668 or in early 1669, Guru Tegh Bahadur crossed the river Brahmaputra and stayed at Dhubri whereas Raja Ram Singh with his troops marched ahead and encamped at Rangamati, about 10 to 12 miles up the river. Shortly afterwards, the Mughals advanced, gained a few initial victories over the Ahoms and laid siege to the town of Gauhati. Finding themselves unable to meet the Mughals in the open, the Ahoms resorted to guerilla tactics<sup>26</sup> to the great annoyance of the Mughals. Tradition has it that simultaneously the Ahom ruler Chakradhwaj Singh (Raja Surg Dev of *Guru Kian Sakhian*), his General Lachit Barphukan and the Commander Raja Indradaman Singh invoked Goddess Kamakhya and employed various spells and incantations to destroy the enemy. When none succeeded, the failure was attributed to the presence of Guru Tegh Bahadur in Raja Ram Singh's camp. Then the magical skill of the most famous sorceress of Kamrup, Neta Dhoban, was pressed into service but no better result could be achieved.<sup>27</sup> In the result, Guru Tegh Bahadur attracted large crowds of Assamese who came to pay homage to him and to seek his blessings. After some time he also marched a few miles ahead and arrived at a place which is called Hajo or after his name Teghpur or Tegh Parbat.<sup>28</sup> This was done to get closer to the camp of Raja Ram Singh. Naturally, during these days the Raja, his officers and many of his soldiers visited his *Durbar* and sought his grace. It is said that the Ahoms too contacted him about this time. Thereupon, he played the role of a peace-maker between the warring parties and even brought about an under-standing, albeit temporary, between them on the basis of the previously existing boundaries.<sup>29</sup> It is characteristic of the deep reverence of the two sides for him that at his instance a high mound of earth was raised by them jointly in memory of Guru Nanak's visit which may be seen even now.<sup>30</sup>

The war did not end speedily. Rather as the rainy season

drew nearer and nearer, the prospects of its early conclusion faded into the thin air. Realizing that Raja Ram Singh and his army would have to stay there for many more months, Guru Tegh Bahadur decided to return after the rainy months. Another reason which is made much of by some of our writers is the deterioration in the situation of the country on account of the launching of a new religious policy by Aurangzeb in 1669. Under such circumstances as these, the Guru was anxious to get back to his home as soon as possible. There is a good deal of weight in this argument which must have weighed heavily with him, if not so much at the time of his departing from Assam.

For the return journey from Assam, Guru Tegh Bahadur took a route different from the one he had travelled during his onward journey.<sup>31</sup> The earlier route was a longer one whereas he was now in hurry and wanted a shorter route. Therefore, in all probability, he travelled back in the direction of Patna *via* Bangaigaon. Siliguri and Katihar. In these areas of Bihar there are strong local traditions of the Guru's visits suggesting that he might have journeyed through these places<sup>32</sup> on the way back from Assam.

While returning, the Guru decided not to visit Patna for the probable reason that he wanted to avoid delay. Instead, he sent Bhai Mati Das to bring his family from there to his camp. On their arrival he instructed his brother-in-law, Kirpal Chand, to take them straight to Lakhnaur *via* Ayodhya. Lucknow, Nanakmata and Hardwar. He informed them that he himself would come to Lakhnaur *via* Delhi where he wanted to meet Rani Pushpa Devi, mother of Raja Ram Singh.<sup>33</sup> This done, he immediately left for Delhi and reached there on 22 *Har*, 1727 BK.<sup>34</sup> (20 June 1670). When he was staying at Dharmasala Bhai Kalyana, Rani Pushpa Devi along with her daughter-in-law (Raja Ram Singh's wife) waited upon the Guru and after paying homage to him inquired of the well-being of her son. The Guru informed her that Raja Ram Singh had achieved initial victories in Assam and consoled her by saying that he would return shortly.<sup>35</sup>

After a stay of two months and thirteen days under strict

police surveillance at Delhi,<sup>36</sup> Guru Tegh Bahadur left for Lakhnaur *via* Rohtak, Kurukshetra and Pahewa. Among others, he was accompanied at this time by Nawab Saif Khan.<sup>37</sup> The Nawab had been leading a hermit's life since 1669. He had followed the Guru to Assam and had met him either in Assam or somewhere on the way back. The members of the Guru's family had already arrived at Lakhnaur. According to *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi*, the exact date of their arrival at this place was *Asun Sudi* 9, 1727 BK. (13 September 1670).<sup>38</sup> It was indeed a great occasion for the people of Lakhnaur. The little Gobind Das was the cynosure of all eyes, not merely because it was his first visit to the place but also because of his magnetic looks and bewitching pranks. On the auspicious day of Dussehra which followed only a few days after their arrival, the lovely child was seated on a cot and his elder maternal uncle, Mehar Chand Subhikhi, performed *Sarvarna* and *Dastar* ceremonies. The colour of the turban was *zamurdi* (green) according to the *Bhat Vahi*.<sup>39</sup> From *Guru Kian Sakhian* we have some more details about this function.<sup>40</sup> The Sahibzada, Gobind Das, was ceremoniously dressed for this special occasion. He was also putting on some arms. A *Tikka* mark of sandal wood was fixed on his forehead by his maternal uncle, Mehar Chand Subhikhi.

Then followed the offerings. First of all, Jhanda, the *Masand* of Lakhnaur, presented 101 *mohurs*. Many others followed suit. After that, every day people would flock from the neighbouring areas and present their offerings to him by way of homage.

After a short stay at Lakhnaur, Guru Tegh Bahadur in company with Bhai Dayal Das, Bhai Sadhu Ram etc., left for village Malla to meet his elder sister, Bibi Viro. The family however was instructed to stay on at Lakhnaur till he would send for them. From Malla the Guru proceeded to Bakala where his mother, Nanaki, had been residing during his absence. Shortly afterwards, a message was sent to Lakhnaur asking all members of his family to join him at Bakala.<sup>41</sup>

We have no clear idea about the duration of Guru Tegh Bahadur's stay at Bakala or about his particular engagements there

and hence it is not possible to say exactly when he arrived back at Kiratpur or Chak Nanaki. Nevertheless, we have the evidence of *Shahid Bilas* by Sewa Singh<sup>42</sup> that in *Chet Sudi* 11, 1729 BK (29 March 1672) Guru Tegh Bahadur was definitely present at Chak Nanaki where Bhai Mani Singh had the good fortune of meeting him on the day of Baisakhi.

Thus came to an end the eventful and long missionary tours of the Ninth Guru undertaken in 1665 A.D. They had practically covered the whole of north India, from Punjab in the West to Bengal and Assam in the East. No Sikh Guru since the time of Guru Nanak had travelled so extensively as did Guru Tegh Bahadur.



## References and Foot Notes

1. See *Guru Kian Sakhian* and *Bhat Vahi Purbi Dakhni Khata Jalhana* (Punjabi University, Patiala).
2. Dr-Trilochan Singh, *op. cit.*, 178.
3. There are strong reasons in support of this contention. In the forward journey of Guru Tegh Bahadur, his brother-in-law Kirpal Chand is mentioned as a member of the party but not so in the backward journey (compare the *Bhat Vahi* entry relating to Banaras dated *Asar Sudi 5*, 1718 B.K. and that relating to Prayag dated *Magh 5*, 1719, BK). Similarly, Mata Gujri finds no mention either when the Guru returns from Patna in early 1664 A.D. or when he undertakes his second eastward journey in 1665 A.D. The reason for leaving the family behind at Patna is stated to be the birth of his son, Gobind Das. The child was then too young to bear the hardships of travel. There are many good grounds to accept the correctness of this view : (i) We have the definite evidence of *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi* that Mata Gujri along with her son Gobind Das and her brother Kirpal Chand arrived at Lakhnaur (near Ambala) from Patna on *Asuj Sudi 9*, 1727 B.K., where her elder brother Mehar Chand performed the *Dastar Ceremony* of Gobind Das. This means that the child must be sufficiently grown up for such a ceremony. According to the prevalent view of the date of his birth, *Poh Sudi 7*, 1723 BK (22 December 1666), he would be then just about 3 years and 9 months, which age seems too small for the ceremony. (ii) The view of the *Bhat Vahi* is also supported by *Guru Kian Sakhian* and *Bansavali Nama*. (iii) Moreover, the popular Sikh tradition about Gobind Das's activities at Patna ill accords with the view of his birth in December 1666.
4. This place is about half a mile from Punjabi University, Patiala and is now called Bahadurgarh after the name of the fort which was named after Guru Tegh Bahadur. The place was then called Saifabad after the name of its founder, Nawab Saif Khan. During his stay here Guru Tegh Bahadur was served by the Nawab with complete devotion and there are strong local traditions connected with the place indicating the way in which the Nawab entertained and honoured the Guru. There are two beautiful *Gurdwaras* here commemorating the sacred visit, one inside the fort and one outside it.
5. *Malwa Desh Rattan di Sakhi Pothi*, Sakhi 33.
6. *Ibid.*, Sakhi 32.
7. *Bhat Vahi Jadobansian, Khata Barhtian*.

From the *Bhat Vahi* :

"Guru Tegh Bahadur ji Mehl Nama.....Nagar Dhamdhan  
Pargana Bangar se Alam Khan Rohilla Shahi hukam gail Dilli se lai kar  
aaya, sal satrai sai baais *Kartik* mase shukla pakhe sudi II ke dihon, sath  
Sati Das, Mati Das bete Hira Mal Chhibbar ke, Gawal Das beta Chhote  
Mal Chhibbar ka, Gurdas beta Kirat Barhtia ka, Sangat beta Binne Uppal

- ka, Jetha Dayal Das bete Mai Das ke Jalhana Blaut hor Sikh fakir farhe aae."
8. Sarup Chand Bhalla, *Mehma Parkash*, p. 673—edited by Gobind Singh Lamba.
  9. S. K. Bhuyan, *Badshah Buranji*, Sakhi 116, p. 163.
  10. It is wrong to attribute the arrest of Guru Tegh Bahadur to Ram Rai, and to make him a scape-goat for the ills of the Mughal government. That Ram Rai had no ill will to Guru Tegh Bahadur and to his son, Guru Gobind Singh, is now proved beyond doubt. According to *Bhat Vahi* evidence, he waited upon Baba Tegh Bahadur at Dharmasala Bhai Kalyana, Delhi, when the latter visited Delhi on the way back from Patna in 1664. Later, he also attended the installation ceremony of Guru Tegh Bahadur at Bakala as member of the Delhi *Sangat* led by Diwan Dargha Mal. This should be enough to establish his bonafides. Moreover, he had the best possible relations with Guru Gobind Singh and actually came all the way from Dehra Dun to meet him at Poanta Sahib.
  11. S. K. Bhuyan, *Badshah Buranji*, Sakhi 116.  
Possibly, it was on this occasion that the commonly believed exchanges between the Guru and Aurangzeb took place.
  12. *Bhat Vahi Jadobansian, Khata Barhtian*.  
From the *Bhat Vahi* :  
"Guru Tegh Bahadur ji Mehl Nama ... ..ko Badshah Aurangzeb ne Kanwar Ram Singh Kachhbaha beta Raja Jai Singh Mirza ke misal me nazarband kiya jane ka hukam diya, do mas tin dihon Guru ji bandikhane band rahe.....sambat satrai sai baais krishana pakhe Pokh mas ki Ekam ko bandhan mukt hue."  
It may be noted that both Bhai Sati Das and Bhai Mati Das, according to the *Bhat Vahi*, visited Hardwar on 21.4.66. This shows two possibilities : (1) From Delhi the whole party including Guru Tegh Bahadur proceeded eastward *via* Hardwar; (ii) the two Bhai with the Guru's permission made a brief visit to Hardwar. The second possibility has greater chances of credibility.
  13. S. K. Bhuyan, *op. cit.*, Sakhi 117, p. 164.
  14. For the upkeep of this *dharamsala* as well as for other religious and charitable expenses, contemporary authorities granted the revenues of village Chhurea. This is proved by the discovery of certain Persian documents by Dr Ved Parkash (see his Ph.D. thesis, *The Sikhs in Bihar*). This is also clear from the proceedings of some cases (1840-44) of the District Court of Shahabad and the Patna High Court in regard to the petition of Mahant Sewan Das of Sasaram. However, this grant was sanctioned during the homeward journey of the Guru either on the earlier occasion or when later he was returning from Assam.
  15. The calculation of this date, as that of the Guru's arrival at Allahabad mentioned earlier, is based on the belief that the birth of Guru Gobind

Singh took place on 22 December 1666. In case this premise should fall, these calculations would also fall. As for the accuracy of this belief there are some serious doubts. All in all, the position is more favourable to the view that the birth took place during the Guru's previous visit to Patna than to the conventional view widely prevalent among the Sikhs. As such, the Guru's return to Patna was a matter of great rejoicing for it was a reunion of the family after so many years.

16. Dr Trilochan Singh has given a list of the more important members of the *Patna Sangat* in his book on Guru Tegh Bahadur, p. 217. Only a few of them may be mentioned here : Bhai Ram Rai, Raja Fateh Chand Maini, Bhai Chain Sukh, Bhai Hira Nand, Bhai Murlidhar, Bhai Mehar Chand, Bhai Sangat Das etc., etc.
17. For these *Hukamnamas* see *Hukamname*, pp. 84-109 edited by Dr Ganda Singh, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1967.
18. A Persian manuscript dated 25 *Safar*, 4th year of the reign of Emperor Muhammad Shah (corresponding to 1723 A.D.) has been discovered which throws light on this. See the unpublished Ph.D. thesis, *The Sikhs in Bihar*, p. 85.
19. See *Hukamnama* 15 and *Hukamnama* 16 in Dr Ganda Singh (ed.), *Hukamname*. English translation of the letter to *Patna Sangat* and Bhai Dayal Das is given below :  

"The wishes of the disciples and the whole *Sangat* shall be fulfilled by the Guru. We have camped at Monghyr. It is the time now for the *Sangat* to serve. Bhai ji, bring all the *Masands* working under you and also the *Sangat* to Monghyr for *Darshan* (personal blessings of the Guru). Whoever comes shall abide in prosperity. This is the opportunity to serve the cause of Sikhism. Whatever Bhai Dayal Das says should be accepted by the *Sangat* as the command of the Guru. The Guru will fulfil the desires of such disciples. There is one more thing, Respected Brother. We are thinking of acquiring some tents for our *Dera* from Shahzadpur. I leave it to you. You can send any order to the *Sangat* and make them comply with your commands. Please send 40 Bihari turbans; also send twenty turbans worth forty rupees. The *Sangat* shall flourish in prosperity".
20. For instance, Dr Trilochan Singh makes it October 1667 A.D. (*Guru Tegh Bahadur*, p. 221) and Dr G.S. Anand, January 1668 A.D. (unpublished Ph.D thesis, p. 130).
21. F.B. Bradley, *The Romance of an Eastern Capital* (1906), p. 272. This well was the scene of a yearly *Mela* right up to 1961 when the whole of Dhanmandi was levelled to the ground, converted into plots and auctioned off. However, since the emergence of Bangla Desh things have taken a turn for the better and efforts are under way to restore the historic *Gurdwara*. Takhat Sri Harmandir Sahib, Patna has set up a Board of Management for the *Gurdwaras* in Bangla Desh. See the *Sikh Review*, March 1972—article by Captain Bhag Singh.

22. Pt. Brahmanand, *Guru Udasin Mat Darpan*, p. 517.
23. For details see *The Sikh Review*, March 1972—article by Captain Bhag Singh, entitled 'Liberation of Gurdwaras in Bangla Desh'.
24. In all probability the "Raja ji" figuring in one of Guru Tegh Bahadur's letters (*Hukamnamas*) refers to Raja Ram Singh of Amber and nobody else. The view that the meeting between the Guru and the Raja took place not at Dacca or Rangamati but at or somewhere near Monghyr finds corroboration in some of the *Hukamnamas* of the Guru. *Hukamname*, pp. 13, 15, 16, 17.
25. Raja Ram Singh had fallen out of the Empeor's grace since the escape of Shiva ji and his son from the fort of Agra in August 1666. When the loss of Gauhati was reported to Delhi the Emperor immediately thought of Raja Ram Singh and summoning him to the Court charged him with the proposed expedition. The formality of appointment was completed on December 27, 1667 with the despatch of a robe of honour and certain other gifts. After mobilizing his troops, the Raja set out for Assam a month or two after and staying for about a week at Patna he left for Dacca where he met Shaista Khan, the governor of Bengal.
26. Dr Trilochan Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 248.
27. For details see Dr Arjan Singh Mann, *Guru Tegh Bahadur and Assam Pradesh*, pp. 151-170, (Shillong 1959).
28. Dr G.S. Anand, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, p. 137.
29. Dr Arjan Singh Mann in his book *Guru Tegh Bahadur and Assam Pradesh*, pp. 159-160, has quoted in support of this from S.K. Bhuyan's *Lachit Barphukan and His Times* and E.A. Gait's *History of Assam*.
30. Dr Arjan Singh Mann, *op. cit.*, p. 161.
31. Dr Trilochan Singh in his book on Guru Tegh Bahadur has expressed the view that Guru Tegh Bahadur returned from Assam to Dacca and after a short stay there, set out on the return journey to Patna *via* Calcutta or whatever it was then, Jagannath Puri and Gaya. This view is rather far-fetched. He has not advanced any evidence in support of his contention. Hence, it is difficult to accept it.
32. Dr G.S. Anand, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, p. 139. He has referred to many *Gurdwaras* in this area which are based on the tradition of the Guru having visited those places.
33. *Guru Kian Sakhian* (ms).
34. "Guru Tegh Bahadur ji Mehl Nama..... Assampati Raja Surg Dev Amberpati Raja Ram Singh se badaigi lai Dilli Bhai Kalyane di Dharamsala me aae niwas kiya, gail Diwan Dargha Mal Chhibbar, Nawab Saif Khan aae, sal satrai sai satais Asarh mas ki baais ko do mas teran dihon Dilli me baraje Guru ji Shahi nazarbandi se mukt hoe Raja Ram Singh ki Mata Pushpa Devi se badaigi lai Madhur Desh aae". *Bhat Vahi Talauda Pargana Jind*.

35. *Guru Kian Sakhian* (ms).
36. *Ibid.* The government surveillance referred to here in all probability was started at Agra. When Guru Sahib reached this place on his way to Delhi in 1670, he was taken under custody and from there was brought to Delhi. This view is supported by the popular and strong tradition about Guru Sahib's arrest at Agra, if read independently of the setting of time somehow imparted to it by later Sikh writers such as Bhai Santokh Singh and Giani Gian Singh.
37. Saqi Must'ad Khan, *Maasir-i-Alamgiri*, ed. J.N. Sarkar (Calcutta 1947), p. 69; Dr Ganda Singh (ed.), *Hukamname*, pp. 108-109.
38. *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi Khata Jalhana Balauton ka*. The evidence of this *Bhat Vahi* is confirmed by a contemporary Pahewa source which records the arrival of Mata Gujri at Pahewa *Tirath* in 1727 B.K. (1670 A.D.). *Vahi Pandit Nil Kanth* son of Pandit Atma Ram Jeotishi, Pahewa *Tirath*.  
From the *Bhat Vahi* :  
"Guru Gobind Das ji beta Guru Tegh Bahadur ji.....Lakhnaur aae, pargana Ambala, Sambat 1727 Asun 9 shukla pakhe, gail Mata Gujri ji aae Mehl Guru Tegh Bahadur ji, Kirpal Chand aaya beta Lal Chand Subhiki ka, Sadhu Ram beta Dharme Khosle ka, Chaupat Rai aaya beta Pere Chhibbar ka, Gawal Das aaya beta Chhote Mal Chhibbar ka, Dasvin ke dihon Guru Gobind Das ji manji te baithe Mamun Mehar Chand Subhikhi beta Lal Chand ka ne sirbarna kiya, zamurdi rang ki pagh bandhai, Guru ki karahi ki."
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Guru Kian Sakhian* (ms), Sakhi 39.
41. There is another equally strong tradition that the family stayed on at Lakhnaur till the Guru arrived at Chak Nanaki and sent for it. But in case the Guru's stay at Bakala was long as we have assumed here, it is more plausible that the family proceeded to Bakala and from there, after a stay, went to Chak Nanaki in company with the Guru.
42. *Shahid Bilas*, p. 58.

## NEW STRAWS IN THE WIND

When Guru Tegh Bahadur returned to Punjab from his long and event-packed missionary tours in the closing months of 1670 A.D., the situation in the country, specially north India, was already taking a new and critical turn. New elements were entering, rather had already entered, into the shaping of the religious, political and economic policies of the State and as a result of that the minds of the vast majority of Indians were gripped by a strong sense of fear and anxiety. Economic developments were equally tragic. Agrarian relations were seriously disturbed. The whole economy in the countryside was in danger of giving way under the heavy weight of relentless exploitation by the State's *Jagirdars* and *Mansabdars*. It is the purpose of this chapter to take note of all these changes and to study what impact they had on the thought and behaviour of the people.

Akbar, the great grandfather of Aurangzeb, has set a high ideal of sovereignty. Unlike his predecessor Muslim rulers, he abandoned the idea that he was primarily the king of his own community. Like a true liberal he raised himself above communal prejudices of the age and removed all discrimination between the Muslims and the non-Muslims in matters of public employment, taxation, religion and culture. *Jizya* and pilgrimage taxes which had all along been a cause of bitter feelings to the non-Muslims, were abolished and in respect of customs and excise duties, uniformity of rates was followed. In the sphere of administrative services, an open-door policy was adopted and although predominance of Muslims still marked the public services, opportunities of employment for others were greatly augmented and now it even became

possible for non-Muslims to rise to the highest positions in the administration. Similar liberalism and equality of treatment marked the fields of religious and cultural relations. The Emperor went so far ahead in the promotion of the new policy that he even exposed himself to the criticism in Muslim orthodox circles that he had ceased to be a Muslim.

Under Akbar's successors, Jehangir and Shah Jahan, the policy of liberalism thus initiated was maintained to a large extent. But already certain forces had been generated by way of reaction whose declared purpose was to counter the trends of liberalism in the name of safety of Islam. The leadership for these reactionary forces was furnished by the *Naqshbandis* of Sirhind headed by Shaikh Ahmed<sup>1</sup> and his successors. Assuming the title of Majaddid Alif-i-Sani (Reformer of the Second Millennium), Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi "took it upon himself to bring political, social and religious affairs in line with the orthodox Sunni canon. His conclusions were based on his personal prejudices, upon the conditions prevalent in and around Sirhind and on the reports which the distinguished Muslim officials conveyed to him from time to time. He thought that Akbar's policies had succumbed to the unwholesome influence of Shaikh Abul Fazl, Faizi and certain other nobles who had diverted him from the line of orthodox Islam. The Emperor's appointment of Hindus to high positions, marriages with Rajput ladies, introduction of *Din-i-Ilahi* and *Sijda*, and celebration of Hindus fairs and festivals were all viewed by Shaikh Ahmed as posing a serious danger to Islam"<sup>2</sup>. His reasoning was that such a liberal policy as Akbar's would strengthen and embolden non-Muslims to weaken and ultimately liquidate the Muslim rule.<sup>3</sup> This had an adverse effect, albeit limited, on the policies of Jehangir and Shah Jahan so that each one was less liberal than his predecessor. "Departures, however slight, from Akbar's wide outlook had begun",<sup>4</sup> and thus "Akbar's ideal of a 'comprehensive State' was gradually being lost sight of".<sup>5</sup> In the words of S.M. Ikram and S.A. Rashid,<sup>6</sup> "Shaikh Ahmed contributed largely to the swing of the pendulum from Akbar's heterodoxy to Aurangzeb's vigorous ultra-orthodoxy rather than a return to Babur's and Hamayun's

policy of *laissez faire*. The rhetoric and appeal of Shaikh Ahmed's letters kindled religious fervour and resulted in a religious revival which took sometime to bear fruit, which completely altered the history of this subcontinent."

Aurangzeb was the most characteristic product of this Sirhindi school of thought. He held Akbar's eclecticism to be wrong and ill-conceived, a great danger to Islam both as religion and state organization. The vast majority of Indians being non-Muslims, the best guarantee, he thought, for the safety of Islam was that they should be kept in a state of utter subjection. Any attempt, in his view, to treat them liberally would in fact amount to endeavouring to undermine the very basis of the Muslim society in India. And to reinforce him in his conviction, there were already certain signs of stirrings noticeable among the non-Muslims, the best examples of which were provided by the Sikhs in Punjab and the Marathas in the Deccan. His heart, therefore, from the very beginning, was set on the total reversal of Akbar's policy. Sri Ram Sharma writes, "The accession of Aurangzeb to the throne in 1658 heralded the triumph of Muslim theologians. He invited their intercession in the affairs of the State when after the capture of Dara he had him tried and condemned as an apostate".<sup>7</sup> This was bound to be so, as the object dearest to his heart was to establish a pure Islamic State on the soil of India. The failure of the liberal-minded Dara Shikoh and later his execution spelt a great disaster to all trends of catholicity in the land just because it marked the triumph of orthodoxy.

Aurangzeb began with puritanic measures. In the second year of his reign he discontinued the celebration of *Nauroz* (first day of the Solar Year). A few years later, music and dancing were prohibited; *Jharoka Darshan* was discontinued on the ground that it smacked of human worship; *Tuladan* (weighing of the Emperor's body against gold, silver and various other valuables) was given up; royal astronomers and astrologers were dismissed; and drinking was stopped and public censors were appointed to enforce prohibition strictly. Severe punishments were awarded for anything that was construed by the theologians as violating the



spirit or even letter of Islam. Permissible length of the beard was fixed at four fingers and offenders against this order were penalized. Garments of gold cloth were forbidden. Clay figures of birds, animals, men and women produced for children were disallowed and violations, if any, were punished. Lighting of lamps on the tombs of saints and other persons was declared an offence. Shia Musalmans were prohibited from celebrating their festival of *Muharrum*. Any talk on any body's part creating the slightest suspicion of disrespect or want of respect towards Islam, the Prophet and his Companions was severely punished, often with death<sup>8</sup>.

But most of these restrictions were of a general nature and covered all communities. Non-Muslims were singled out for discriminatory treatment in four specific fields, namely public services, construction and repair of temples, conversions and taxation. The Emperor's deep-rooted suspicion of the Hindus' bonafides seriously affected their position in the services, particularly in the higher echelons. Sri Ram Sharma after careful comparison of relevant figures for Hindu *Mansabdars* in the reigns of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb has this to say on the matter<sup>9</sup>: "This means that towards the end of Aurangzeb's reign there was a smaller number of Hindus occupying the *mansabs* of 1000 and above, than the number of similar *mansabdars* towards the end of Shah Jahan's reign. But the decrease in number becomes still more significant when we take into account the increase in the total number of the *mansabdars* which rose enormously in the reign of Aurangzeb. In 1657 under Shah Jahan there were 8000 *mansabdars* in all, whereas in 1690 the number of *mansabdars* had risen to 14556.....The percentage of the Hindus in the higher ranks of the State services could not have been more than 50 per cent of what it was towards the end of Shah Jahan's reign."

Even before Aurangzeb, in the reigns of Jehangir and Shah Jahan, there were several instances of destruction of temples but then these occurrences were generally part of military operations. It was only under Aurangzeb that religious considerations dominated the formulation of State policies and a carefully planned attack was launched for bidding the construction and repair of

temples. The provinces of Gujarat and Orissa were among the first targets of Aurangzeb's fanaticism. Both of them witnessed wanton destruction of numerous sacred shrines. In 1666 the stone railing of the famous Keshav Rai Temple of Mathura was removed by imperial orders. Three years later in 1669 a general order was issued for the destruction of all schools and temples of Hindus. "Orders were now sent to the governors of all the provinces that they should destroy the schools and temples of the infidels and put an end to their educational activities as well as the practices of the religion of the *Kafirs*."<sup>10</sup>

Soon after the issuance of the order, reports of the destruction of temples began to pour in from all parts of the Empire. A royal messenger was sent to demolish the temple of Malarina in May 1669. In August 1669 the temple of Vishvanath at Banaras was demolished and later a mosque was raised on the site of the demolished building. The temple of Gopinath in Banaras too was destroyed about the same time. An attempt was also made to destroy the Shaiva temple of Jangamwari in Banaras, but the idea was somehow given up for the time being. Then came the turn of the temple of Keshav Rai at Mathura built at a cost of 33 lacs of rupees by Rao Bir Singh Bundela in the reign of Jehangir. The temple was levelled to the ground and a mosque was ordered to be built on the site.

Similar destructions were ordered in the various Rajput States, Ajmer, Ujjain, Bengal and other provinces of the Empire. The temples of the Deccan practically escaped the wrath of the Emperor because of his delicate position in the south on account of the Maratha rising. In this hour of crisis the Sikhs suffered equally with the Hindus for "Aurangzeb ordered the temples of the Sikhs to be destroyed and the Guru's agents (*Masands*) for collecting the tithes and presents of the faithful to be expelled from the cities."<sup>11</sup>

In the sphere of taxation discrimination against the non-Muslims was reintroduced. Although *Jizya* was not reimposed till 1679, the pilgrimage tax was relevied. In 1665 it was ordered that custom duties on the Muslims be fixed at 2.5 percent and in the case of the Hindus at 5 percent. For gardens Hindus were required to

pay at the rate of 20 percent, whereas for the Muslims the rate was 16.6%. In 1669-70 it was ordered that in a lunar year the Muslims should pay 2.5% and the Hindus 5% on the price of their cattle.

Equally deplorable was the position of the non-Muslims in the matter of conversions. They had occurred in earlier periods as well. Islam being a missionary religion and the ruling Muslim community being in a minority, great importance had always been attached to conversion and many ingenious devices had been employed to attain this much-desired goal. However, the tempo was greatly intensified during the reign of Aurangzeb. There is certainly a lot of exaggeration in the Hindu and Sikh traditions that the Emperor made it a habit of collecting a maund and a quarter of sacred Hindu *Janeus* (sacred threads) every day, but that he took considerable personal interest in the matter is well borne out by the available accounts of his administration<sup>12</sup>. The fact that a deputation of *Pandits*<sup>13</sup> appeared in the *Durbar* of Guru Tegh Bahadur in May 1675 and complained of the Government conducting a wholesale campaign of conversion is a historical testimony too strong to be brushed aside.

The economic scene was likewise dismal and full of uncertainty. The Mughal imperial administration was based on *Mansabdari* system which in its turn was based on the system of revenue assignments. Each *Mansabdar* was a public servant and in his case appointment carried military obligations. He was required to keep a contingent of troops to be requisitioned by the Central Government if and when necessary. For his own maintenance as well as for the maintenance of his contingent he was granted a *Jagir* which was not a grant of any land rights but only an assignment of revenue accruing from a particular piece of land as per assessment regulations of the Central Government. Care was taken that the conduct of the *Jagirdars* in the collection of revenue from their cultivators was strictly watched over and lapses, if any, were punished. Even so, the system suffered from an inherent defect. The assessment of land revenue being related to military obligations, the Centre, in its anxiety to make the *Mansabdars* keep larger contingents, was often prone to over-assessment of land.<sup>14</sup> The

people who suffered most for this flaw in the system were the cultivators<sup>15</sup> and not the *Jagirdars*. Added to this was the practice of frequent transfers of the assignees. This introduced an element of contradiction between the interests of the imperial administration and the individual *Jagirdar*. "A *Jagirdar* whose assignment was liable to be transferred any moment and who never held the same *jagir* for more than three or four years at the most, could never follow a farsighted policy of agricultural development. On the other hand, his personal interests would sanction and act of oppression that conferred an immediate benefit upon him, even if it ruined the peasantry and so destroyed the revenue-paying capacity of that area for all time."<sup>16</sup> Bernier<sup>17</sup> thus describes the outlook of individual *Jagirdars* :

"The Timariots (Bernier's term for the *Jagirdars*), Governors and Revenue Contractors on their part thus reason on this matter : "Why should the neglected state of this land create uneasiness in our minds ? and why should we expend our money and time to render it fruitful ? We may be deprived of it in a single moment, and our exertions would benefit neither ourselves nor our children. Let us draw from the soil all the money we can thought the peasant should leave it, when commanded to quit, a dreary wilderness".

What Bernier has written is corroborated by other contemporary writers such as St. Xavier, Manrique<sup>18</sup> and Bhimsen. When the *Jagirdar*, instead of appointing his own agents to collect the revenue, farmed out the *Jagir*, the evil was still worse. The result was a reckless exploitation of the peasantry. When the peasants could not meet the extortionate demands of the *Jagirdars*, they were "beaten unmercifully and maltreated". Frequently, the peasants were compelled to sell their women, children and cattle in order to meet the revenue demand<sup>19</sup>.

Defaulting in revenue payment was not, however, the only cause for which such punishment was inflicted on the peasants. It was the general law in the Mughal Empire that if any robbery occurred within the area of a *Jagirdar* or a *Faujdar*, he was obliged either to trace the culprits and recover the loot or to restore the

lost property himself. It offered the officials an excuse to sack any village they chose to suspect, resulting in untold misery for its people.

Under such circumstances as these, it is no wonder that the flight of peasants from their lands became a common phenomenon. Many of these fugitives settled on virgin lands to escape the exactions of their masters. No doubt, land was not in short supply and it was always possible for distressed cultivators to migrate to fresh areas, but the privations of dislocation were no meagre ordeal to go through and generally served as a great deterrent.

Two other possibilities were open to them, in case they did not want to settle on new lands. One, and the more popular of the two, was to migrate to the estate of some neighbouring *Zamindar*, where conditions of work were comparatively better. The reason was not the *Zamindars* did not exploit their cultivators but that they were in need of their support for certain selfish ends and welcomed them. The second possibility was less common but not rare. The more daring of the fleeing peasants took to loot and plunder and often made common cause with people of similar persuasions, or with people who were prepared to run the risk of rising into rebellion against the authorities. Villages and areas which went into rebellion for refusal to pay taxes were known as *Mawas* and *Zor-talab*, as opposed to the revenue-paying villages called *Raiyati*. Usually, the villages which were protected in some measure by ravines or forests, or hills were more likely to defy the authorities than those in the open plains<sup>20</sup>. In the event of such peasant risings assuming large proportions, community of caste or community of faith, as events were soon to show, acted as major rallying forces.

In this situation the role of *Zamindars* was very crucial. They were different from *Jagirdars* in three main respects. First, their rights did not originate from imperial grants though there were also some exceptions to this rule. Secondly, they had the right to keep small armies of their own for their personal purposes. Thirdly, they were frequently leaders of caste or tribal groups. As such, they were men of considerable influence in their respective areas.

Though their influence was often utilized by the authorities in collecting land revenue from the people, yet more often than not they were a thorn in their side and were seldom trusted. In the seventeenth century, specially during the period of Aurangzeb, when the landed economy started cracking down under the heavy weight of *Jagirdars'* gross exploitation of peasantry and the latter's frequent flights from their lands, the *Zamindars* benefited greatly. They rehabilitated the fugitive distressed peasants on their estates and enlisted the more daring of them in their private armies. This made them all the more independent in their attitude and behaviour towards the authorities. Both the government and the *Jagirdars* were resentful because the *Zamindars* were sheltering their defiant and defaulting revenue-payers and wherever and whenever feasible, made reprisals to penalize the offenders. The *Zamindars* retaliated by a still greater degree of defiance to them. They were not acting from any large patriotic or humanitarian motives, for the things uppermost in their minds were frequently their own selfish interests but in the struggle that ensued thus, they gained much in stature and reputation as being protectors of oppressed peasantry and defenders against official tyranny. Gradually, as the number of the starving, homeless peasants grew and the peasants took to arms themselves, it became possible for the *Zamindars* to organize them into still larger bands or armies for dismantling the Mughal Empire and expanding their chiefships.<sup>21</sup>

The above account of the state of the country is rather brief but may be enough to give us a peep into the socio-economic situation prevailing in the land about the time when Guru Tegh Bahadur was at the helm of the Sikh movement. There was widespread discontent among the cultivating classes. Unable to meet the extortionate demands of the government officials and *Jagirdars* they were now in a defiant mood. In their struggle against oppression they found ready helpers in *Zamindars* who were also in a defiant mood and who had ceased to care much for the powers-that-be. The changed mood or attitude was not so much in evidence in the urban areas as it was in rural areas, but even there it was not totally absent. This may be clear from a few instances of

resistance offered when attempts were made by the government's agents to destroy temples and idols of deities. For example, in March 1671 the government party sent to demolish temples in and around Ujjain was attacked and its leaders and many of his followers were killed.<sup>22</sup> Nearer home, in the *Sarkar* of Sirhind a Sikh temple was demolished and converted into a mosque. The *Imam* who was appointed to look after this mosque, was subsequently killed.<sup>23</sup>

*References and Foot Notes*

1. Shaikh Ahmed (A.D. 1564-1624) was son of Shaikh Abdul Ahad Faruqi Kabuli Naqshbandi and traced his decent back to the Second Caliph, Umar (A.D. 634-644) who was also known as Faruqi. His prominent successors who left a deep mark on the affairs of the State were Shaikh Muhammad Masum, Muhammad Said, Khwaja Naqshband and Muhammad Zubair. There is at Sirhind even now a beautiful construction called *Rauza Sharif* enshrining the tombs of Shaikh Ahmed and his successors.
2. Fauja Singh (ed.), *Sirhind Through the Ages*, p. 55.
3. Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi's views about non-Muslims may be judged from the comment he made on Guru Arjan's death : The execution of the accursed *Kafir* of Goindwal at this time is a very good achievement indeed and has become the cause of a great defeat of the hateful Hindus.  
*Maktubat* , I (iii), Letter No.193, pp. 95-6.
4. Sri Ram Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughals* (1972), p. 98.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
6. *History of Muslim Civilization in India and Pakistan*, quoted in *Sirhind Through the Ages* (ed. Fauja Singh), p. 60.
7. Sri Ram Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 127.
8. A few instances will clarify the point. Hussain Malik was beheaded for using disrespectful language regarding the Companions of the Prophet. Sufi Sarmad was executed for the statement that heavens came down to the Prophet and not the *vice versa*. According to theologians he should have said that the Prophet ascended to the heavens. Sri Ram Sharma, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-134.
9. Sri Ram Sharma, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-156.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 171; Saqi Mastad Khan, *Maasir-i-Alamgiri*, 81 ed. J.N. Sarkar (Calcutta, 1947).
11. Khafi Khan, *Muntkhab-ut-Twarikh*, II, p. 652 as quoted in J.N. Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, p. 212.
12. Sri Ram Sharma, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-206.
13. *Shahid Bilas*, p. 59.
14. Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India* (1963), p. 319.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 319. "These considerations explain why the revenue demand as set by the imperial authorities usually approximated to the surplus produce, leaving the peasant only the barest minimum needed for subsistence".
16. *Ibid.*, p. 320.
17. Francois Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, 1956-1958 (tr. by A. Constance, 2nd edition revised by V.A. Smith, London, 1916), p. 227.
18. F.S. Manrique, *Travels 1629-43*, tr. C.E. Luard, Hakluyt Society, 1927, II, p. 272.



19. Irfan Habib, *op. cit.*, p. 322.
20. Irfan Habib, *op. cit.*, p.331.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 338.
22. Sri Ram Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 173.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 177. This information is based on *Kalima-i-Ta'yyabat*, 115.

## VI

### TOURING THE MALWA AND BANGAR DESH

As hinted in an earlier chapter, Guru Tegh Bahadur returned to Chak Nanaki approximately either towards the end of 1671 A.D. or in the beginning of 1672 A.D. By then the most essential buildings were complete so that the Guru could now settle down to a fixed routine of life. The author of *Shahid Bilas* makes it amply clear when he writes<sup>1</sup> :

“Mani Singh the wiseman arrived with his family in the month of *Chet Sudi* 11, 1729 B.K. (29 March 1672 A.D.) and met Guru Tegh Bahadur at Chak Nanaki. Such were the Guru’s engagements then : reading of *Bani* (holy hymns), listening to *Bani*, writing of *Bani* and getting written copies of *Bani*.”

As the news of Guru Tegh Bahadur’s residence at Chak Nanaki spread around, people flocked in large numbers to have a glimpse of his holy personality and to seek his blessings. Along with his usual spiritual instruction on the merits of a life of godliness, he delivered to them his message of courage and fearlessness. He held up to them the high ideal : “Fear not and Frighten not.”<sup>2</sup> The hard times and formidable challenges with which the people were faced at the time naturally dismayed their spirits. In this critical state of affairs the Guru’s constant effort was to bolster up their morale and to urge them not to submit meekly to any injustice or tyranny. Considering the mood of the country, it was but natural that his words should fall on receptive ears and bring ever increasing crowds to his *Durbar*.

It was at some stage during his stay at Chak Nanaki, most probably about the middle of 1673 A.D., that Guru Tegh Bahadur

decided to go on his second tour of Malwa and Bangar Desh.<sup>3</sup> The first tour of these tracts had been made as far back as 1664-65. A.D.<sup>4</sup> The need for the second tour seems to have arisen out of the new elements in the situation about which a brief idea has been afforded in the last chapter. And the choice of the area of the tour was governed by several considerations. First, it was the nearest and most convenient of all places. Secondly, the Guru had already travelled through it and acquired firsthand knowledge about the region as well as its people. Thirdly, thanks to the work of Guru Hargobind and Guru Har Rai, the people of the area had offered a good response to the appeal of Sikhism. The seed of this faith had been planted well and with a little more care and attention it could sprout and grow into a fine sapling. Fourthly, it seems to be the Guru's conviction that the people here, particularly the *Zamindars*, were reputed for their sincere, bold and independent behaviour.

As for the tour, the first place mentioned by the author of *Malwa Desh Rattan di Sakhi Pothi*<sup>5</sup> after departure from Chak Nanaki, is Saifabad, now called Bahadurgarh. This was not the first visit of the Guru to the place, as we have seen before. Saif Khan, the chief of Saifabad had known Guru Tegh Bahadur now for several years and had become his sincere and fervent devotee. Deeply impressed by his love and devotion, the Guru together with his family and followers stayed here for about four months.<sup>6</sup>

Resuming his journey, the Guru moved ahead by slow marches and passing through a number of villages, arrived at village Mulowal, about 40 miles to the west of modern Patiala town.<sup>7</sup> There was only one well in this village and that too had brackish water, unfit for drinking. The people were in great difficulty and had to fetch drinking water from a great distance. The Guru realized the hardships they had to undergo and wanted to help them. Under his instructions nine more wells were later sunk at different points and the people were most pleased to find that they all contained good and wholesome water. The local tradition goes even further and says that the brackish water of the previous well also, as if by a miracle worked out by the Guru, turned fresh

and drinkable. But what followed was even more significant. The Guru made inquiries from the chief man of the village, *Chaudhri* Goinda, as to who were the recognized important heads of families residing in the village. On receiving the requisite information, they were all sent for and honoured by the grant of turbans (*Siropas*), including *Chaudhri* Gobinda.<sup>8</sup> The Guru stayed there for several days and by the time he left all inhabitants of Mulowal had become his sincere devotees, perhaps also Sikhs.

From Mulowal the Guru went to Sekha, a few miles to the west. He was now in the area of the Jawandha *Zamindars* who had twenty-two villages belonging to their caste group. At Sekha also lived their chief named *Chaudhri* Tirloka. He was celebrating the marriage of his daughter at the time of the Guru's visit and hence paid no heed to him.<sup>9</sup> The Guru soon struck his camp and moved forward saying that Sekha would suffer on account of the haughtiness of its people.

Next, Guru Tegh Bahadur camped at Hadiaya, now a railway station on the Barnala-Bhatinda railway line. While he was travelling in the direction of this place, the people of Sekha came up from behind and begged forgiveness for their indifferent behaviour. The Guru was pleased that they had at last shed off their arrogance and gave them his blessings. At Hadiaya, the people of another Jawandha village humbly waited upon him and served him and his *Sangat* with milk and milk-products and earned his blessings. Sometime later, the army of a local Muslim Chief Isa Khan attacked<sup>10</sup> and devastated the village Sekha. It was commonly regarded as the outcome of its people's follies. This gave a big boost to Guru Tegh Bahadur's credit in the whole of this area.

As for the people of Hadiaya, they at first showed indifference to the Guru. But they soon realized their mistake and offered their whole-hearted services to him. During his stay there the Guru found that the village was in the grip of a terrific epidemic causing mortality by suffocation through the swelling of neck. They were asked to have a dip in the small pond close by, the water of which had some medicinal qualities for the cure of that epidemic. When they hesitated to do so because the water was dirty, he led the way

by himself having a dip in it. Subsequently, he helped the people in deepening and widening that pond which has now become the holy tank of Gurusar<sup>11</sup> where every year a big fair is held.

From Hadiaya Guru Tegh Bahadur reached Dhilwan *via* Sohiwal.<sup>12</sup> The people of Dhilwan village were called *Mota Zamindars*. They received the Guru with great reverence and rendered to him and his people the best possible service that they could do. The Guru liked the place and prolonged his stay for several months. In the meantime occurred a solar eclipse. The occasion was made use of by the Guru to hold a big fair which was attended by large crowds of people from the neighbouring areas. A huge *Langar* was organized where free food was served to all and sundry. The occasion was also marked by Guru Tegh Bahadur giving away in charity a batch of 101 cows. All this created a deep sense of reverence for the Guru in the minds of the people

From Dhilwan Guru Tegh Bahadur moved on to the villages of Dikhi, Maisar Khana, Pandherian, Ali Sher, Joga and Bhupali. Out of these he camped at Dikhi, Ali Sher and Bhupali where the local *Panchayats* as well as those of neighbouring villages waited upon him made offerings to him and were happy to receive his blessings. One of the persons who came to pay homage to him was *Chaudhuri Jagraj*. The Guru was specially pleased with him and asked him to found a new village on a particular mound and assured him of success and prosperity.<sup>13</sup>

After Bhupali, the Guru camped at Khiva where one person, named Singha presented himself before him and single-handedly rendered the service of furnishing him with fodder, fuel wood, utensils, etc. The Guru admired him for this devoted service. When his fellow-villagers learnt about what he had done, they greatly appreciated it and permanently doubled his share in all customary distributions of the village community.<sup>14</sup> Marching from here when the Guru reached the village Samaon, he was informed of the arrival of a Sikh *Sangat* from Kabul. Probably, they had first gone to Chak Nanaki and learning from there that the Guru had gone on travels into Malwa, they followed him hither. In honour

of their visit, a special *Diwan* was held where they offered to the Guru their precious presents. The whole affair took place under the shade of a *Van* tree on the wayside. A peasant who happened to be working in his field nearby and was watching the whole scene, was so deeply moved that he later offered to the Guru all his cooked food which he had just received from home. Out of benevolence the Guru showered God's blessings on him and his family.<sup>15</sup>

Next the Guru moved on to village Bhikhi. While he was camping there, a local *Zamindar*, Des Raj (Desu), waited upon him. He was wearing round his neck a small symbol showing that he was a follower of Sultan Sakhi Sarvar. When the Guru noticed that, he expressed his surprise and asked him to cast it off. At the same time he bestowed upon him five arrows and assured him that so long as he cherished them, he would be victorious in all his undertakings.<sup>16</sup> Des Raj promised to abide by the advice. But when he reached home, he was taunted by his brothers in faith, *Shaikhs*, for his apostasy. Not able to stand the criticism, he cast off the Guru's arrows and then destroyed them. The result was that he lost the goodwill of the Sikhs. Sometime later, some people of village Maur interceded with the Guru on his behalf. The Guru was ready to excuse him but Des Raj failed to shake off the *Sultani* influence on him.

Khayala and Maur villages were visited next. The Guru camped at both these places and pleased with the reception accorded to him by the local people showered on them his blessings. The tradition connected with his visit to Maur has it that the Guru drove out a greatly dreaded demon from a so-called haunted place in the village thereby earning the deep gratitude of the people.

At a small distance from Maur, at a place now called Talha Sahib, a huge function was held in celebration of a Sikh Guru's anniversary. The function drew large crowds of people from all over the area, because by now the reputation of the great Guru had travelled all through the Malwa region. Guru Tegh Bahadur stayed here for about a month and a half.<sup>17</sup>

Next, the Guru stopped at Talwandi, now known as Damdama Sahib. He described the place as his secret *Kashi* and prophesied that his successor, the Tenth Master, would have a long stay at the place and would uncover this *Kashi*. Before he left, he inaugurated the digging of a big holy tank there. He made the start by removing mud in his personal shawl. His noble example galvanized the whole crowd standing around him into immediate action so that the tank became ready in a short time. It is now called Gurusar.<sup>18</sup>

From *Talwandi*, Guru Tegh Bahadur proceeded to Bhatinda where he stayed for nine days and then moved on to a place now called Sulisar. At this place a few rascals attempted to steal the Guru's horses but they were caught and hanged by the Sikhs.<sup>19</sup> This was a good example for those evil-minded people who made light of the Sikhs' presence.

The next stoppage was at village Bara. The *Panchayat* of the place accorded a reverential welcome to the Guru and his followers. The Guru was so much pleased with them that he decided to stay on for the whole of the rainy season. For the supply of green fodder to animals in the Guru's camp, a number of fields in the village were placed at the disposal of the Guru and were sown with *Mothi*. No doubt, the horses and oxen of Guru Tegh Babadur made a good feed of it when the green crop was ready for use.<sup>20</sup> On departing from there the Guru blessed the good-hearted people of Bara by saying that so long as they continued residing there, they would never experience defeat or humiliation.

The next camping station was Bachhoana, a village inhabited by Ranghars. This too was a very nice place and the Guru had a week's stay here on the bank of a big pond. The place was famous for abundance of milk-yielding buffaloes and cows. A most significant feature of the *Sakhi Pothi* account pertaining to the place is the reference to the vast numbers<sup>21</sup> of people attending upon the Guru during the journey.

From Bachhoana Guru Tegh Bahadur proceeded to Gobindpura<sup>22</sup> and after a short stay there moved on to Gaga, Gurne and Makorar. The Ranghars of village Gaga misbehaved towards

the Sikhs when the latter were encamped there. However, they soon regretted their mistake and asked for the Guru's pardon. To begin with, the Guru paid no heed to them, but when they still followed him begging for forgiveness, he excused them saying that their identity would ever remain unimpaired though they would never be an adequate match for the local Sidhu *Jats* who had earlier accorded him a very enthusiastic reception. As a mark of their deep reverence for him the Sidhus had made offerings of potfuls of *ghee* and cotton sheets. They also fell under the spell of Guru Tegh Bahadur's personality and entered into the fold of Sikhism.<sup>23</sup>

Soon after, the Guru made his entrance into the Bangar Desh which was in fact just an extension of the Malwa Desh. He had traversed this tract previously also and therefore felt equally at home while threading his way through the region. Dhamdhan was the most important of the places visited by him in this part of the country and he must have made a fairly long stay here. It is probable that he proceeded further down into the heart of Haryana and did extensive touring before returning to Chak Nanaki.

The foregoing account of the travels of Guru Tegh Bahadur in the Malwa and Bangar Desh is undoubtedly brief and at places rather vague.<sup>24</sup> Even so, some useful inferences may be drawn from it. First, the tour left a deep impact on the people of the region and thus was a grand success. The Guru took care to make personal contacts with village brotherhoods. He identified himself completely with them and took keen interest in solving some of their difficult problems. He conferred honours on the village elders and thereby won them over and brought them under his influence. At places he organized big functions to be able to make it possible for large numbers of people to come together and discuss problems of common interest. He also established a few respectable centres of Sikh faith in the midst of the region possibly with a view to giving continuity to the important mission he had undertaken. The *Panchayats* of different villages and caste groups vied with one another in serving the Guru and his followers, though in the beginning in the areas visited by him for the first time,



indifference was the general trait of their attitude. Secondly, the Guru paid special attention to *Zamindars* and heads of castes as they were the natural leaders of the people commanding great resources and influence.<sup>25</sup> Beside, they were now the protectors of the distressed peasantry. Thirdly, for the greater part of the tour, the Guru had vast numbers of people in attendance upon him. This was specially true during the later phase of his travels. This, it may be said, caused great panic and misgivings in official circles and exaggerated and often distorted reports were made by the official news-writers to the Government regarding the movements of Guru Tegh Bahadur.<sup>26</sup> The fact that in the course of his tour the Guru was conducting himself in a grand and dignified manner lent some palusibility to these reports. Subsequently, these very reports appear to have formed part of the basis on which action was taken against the Guru and some of his loyal followers. As regard the duration of this tour, no definite statement is possible. Nevertheless, calculating on the basis of the evidence available in *Sakhi Pothi*, this might have lasted at least a year and a half, if not more. Probably, the start was made about the middle of 1673 A.D. and it was not till the end of 1674 or the beginning of 1675 A.D. that the Guru with his large train of followers returned home.

*References and Foot Notes :*

1. *Shahid Bilas*, p. 59.
2. This is an exact English translation of the following verse of his :  
"Bhai Kahu Kau dait nai nai bhai manat aan". (*Mohalla 9, Slok 16*).
3. There are a few references in our basic source of this tour, *Malwa Desh Rattan di Sakhi Pothi*, which show that Mata Gujri and Sahibzada Gobind Das accompanied the Guru on the tour. (see *Sakhis I*, 4). This could happen only after the Guru's return from the eastern tours, not earlier.
4. For details see Chapter 3.
5. This work was the result of a survey made by an itinerant *Udasi Sadhu* from the region itself near about 1823 A.D. Later, Bhai Santokh Singh made use of it for his famous work, *Gur Partap Suraj Granth* (1843). In 1876 A.D. it was translated into English and published by Sir Attar Singh Bhadaur. The Punjabi version was first edited and published by Bhai Vir Singh in 1950. For the Guru's travels in the Malwa and Bangar Desh at present this *Sakhi Pothi* is the only fundamental source available. It is not, however, an exhaustive account and therefore, the Guru Tegh Bahadur Martyrdom Memorial Society has planned a complete survey of the Guru's travels not only in Punjab but also in all other States visited by him.
6. *Sakhi Pothi*, *Sakhi I*, pages 1-5.  
As regards Nawab Saif Khan, he was son of Nawab Tarbiyat Khan and brother of Fidai Khan who was a foster-brother of Aurangzeb. He was appointed *Subahdar* of Agra in 1659 for his faithful service to Emperor Aurangzeb. After a time he left service and led a hermit's life. In July 1662, he met the Emperor who granted him a robe, a sword and the rank of *Do Hazari*. In December 1665, he was appointed *Subahdar* of Kashmir. In this capacity he was responsible for the conquest of Greater Tibet and promotion of Islam there. For these services, he was given a further lift and sent to the Deccan. In 1669 he was reappointed *Subahdar* of Kashmir but he soon turned a hermit and was removed from his rank. Surely, he was now under the great spell of Guru Tegh Bahadur. He adopted the title of *Faqirulla*. About December 1675, he returned from the hermit's life and was regranted his *Mansab*. After that he served, one after the other, as *Subahdar* of Bihar and *Subahdar* of Allahabad. He died in 1685.  
*Maasir-i-Alamgiri*, pp. 16, 25, 33, 34, 53, 69, 73, 157, 104, 140.
7. In the onward journey, the site of the present Patiala town was by tradition the place of the Guru's first stopover which is now marked by a beautiful *Gurdwara* called *Gurdwara Moti Bagh*. Another sacred place associated by popular tradition with the Guru's visit is the site of the present *Gurdwara Dukh Nivaran Sahib*.
8. *Sakhi Pothi*, *Sakhi 2*, pp. 5-6.
9. *Ibid.*, *Sakhi 4*, p. 7.

10. *Ibid.*, Sakhi 5, pp.8-10.
11. *Ibid.*, Sakhi 5, p. 10.
12. *Ibid.*, Sakhi 6, p. 11. There is a very interesting reference here to the people of village Dhaula. He was on his way to this village when he was informed about the class character of the inhabitants. He at once changed his mind saying that they belonged to the camp of the Turks and instead proceeded to Sohiwal.
13. *Ibid.*, Sakhi 11, p. 14.
14. *Ibid.*, Sakhi 13, p. 15.
15. *Ibid.*, Sakhi 14, p. 16.
16. *Ibid.*, Sakhi 17, p. 18.
17. *Ibid.*, Sakhis 18, 19, 20, pp. 20-22. It may not be out of place here to mention that some of these places such as Maisar Khana, Maur, Talwandi, Sabo etc. were also visited during his first visit to Malwa in 1664-65. Reading the various Sakhis carefully we find that there were already Sikhs, if not many in number, present in the area around Talwandi and Maur, for which reason the reception of Guru Tegh Bahadur and his followers was much warmer than in the places visited immediately after Mulowal.
18. *Ibid.*, Sakhi 20, p. 21.
19. *Ibid.*, Sakhi 22, p. 24.
20. *Ibid.*, Sakhi 23, p. 24.
21. *Ibid.*, Sakhi 25, p. 25. There is a very clear reference here that the Sikhs of Gobindpura received the Guru and served him to the best of their ability. This proves that Sikhs were already there at this place when Guru Tegh Bahadur arrived.
22. *Ibid.*, Sakhi 28, p. 26.
23. The order of sequence of the Guru's visit in these travels has been kept the same as that given in *Sakhi Pothi*. But this order may not always be correct. However, so far as the broad idea of the area traversed by the Guru is concerned, the picture should be sufficiently clear from this narrative, which really is the main object of this account.
24. Munshi Sohan Lal, *Umdat-ut-Twarikh*, Daftar I, p. 48.
25. *Ibid.*, English version of the relevant extract is given below :  
 "After a long time thousands of *Sipahis* and other people, such as horsemen and camelmen along with all equipments and workshops usually in possession of kings rallied to His Exalted Highness. Besides them, every man who was not well-disposed towards authority, such as *Amils*, *Zamindars*, farmers and revenue officials like *Diwans* and *Mutsaddis* flocked to His Goodness. Since every joy is inevitably followed by pain, some wicked-minded people reported to Emperor Alamgir that in the Malwa country the Guru is encamped with thousands of *Sipahis* and that every ill-disposed person among the State functionaries has flocked to him and warned him that if the evil was not nipped in the bud, it would be difficult after a time to eradicate it."

A similar view is expressed in Bute Shah's *Tarikh-i-Punjab* (ms., p. 171).

26. Guru Tegh Bahadur was present at Chak Nanaki on the *Baisakhi* of 1672 A.D. On the *Baisakhi* of 1673 A.D. he held a big religious function at Chak Nanaki. On *Jeth* 15, 1730 B.K. (May 1673), according to the *Gurparnali* writer, Gulab Singh, the marriage of *Sahibzada* Gobind Das with Mata Jito was solemnized at Guru ka Lahore. So it could be only after this that the long tour of Malwa could be undertaken. As regards the duration of this tour, even according to *Sakhi Pothi*, it exceeds a year and a half. So, its conclusion could not be earlier than the end of 1674, or the beginning of 1675 A.D.

## VII

### MARTYRDOM

Many months had not yet passed since Guru Tegh Bahadur's arrival back at Chak Nanaki when in the month of *Jeth*, *Sudi* 11, 1732 B.K.<sup>1</sup> (25 May 1675 A.D.), a sixteen-member deputation of terrorized Kashmiri Pandits waited upon him. The deputationists, with tears in their eyes, apprized the Guru of the horrific goings-on in the province of Kashmir, of how the local *Subahdar*, Iftikhar Khan,<sup>2</sup> had unleashed an all-out campaign of converting Kashmiri Brahmins by force and was massacring all those who were refusing to embrace the new creed. Hearing their tale of woe, Guru Tegh Bahadur's heart was deeply moved.<sup>3</sup> What was now communicated to him was not entirely new. He was already in full consciousness of the deepening crisis in the land and had been continually bracing up the people's spirit against the forces of tyranny let loose by the Emperor's fanaticism. Only a few months back he was in the Malwa and Bangar Desh touring from place to place, meeting village *Panchayats* and distressed peasants and *Zamindars*, delivering to them his message of hope and courage and urging them against tacit submission to injustice, tyranny or aggression. However, the official excesses narrated by the *Pandits'* deputaion had a new and sharper poignancy which could brook no further delay in resisting the evil.

The issue at stake was not merely of a localised nature confined to the microscopic Brahmin minority in the valley of Kashmir. It was a much larger issue involving millions of non-Muslims-Hindus, Sikhs and others—whose lives had been adversely affected. Even more than that, it was question of moral and spirit-

ual values which formed the bedrock of human civilization and which the entire Sikh movement right from the days of its inception had striven to uphold; a question of *Dharma* as understood in the broadest Indian sense. As for the Brahmin deputationists, they, too, could not be spokesmen merely of the suffering Brahmin minority in a small region<sup>4</sup>. They were the natural leaders of the Hindu community, who felt deeply concerned about the Government's frontal attack on the honour and religion of their co-religionists.

The leader of the deputation, Kirpa Ram<sup>5</sup>, a Kashmiri Datt Brahmin from Mattan (near Pehalgam), had long resided at the *Durbar* of Guru Tegh Bahadur and was fully conversant with his teaching as well as his reactions about the Mughal Government's changed policies towards the non-Muslims' schools, temples and modes of worship. It was he, therefore, who had led the leading fellow-Brahmins to the Guru. From what he had seen and known of Guru Tegh Bahadur, he had convinced his companions that the Guru was an ideal embodiment of supreme courage and determination, completely detached from the allurements of life and capable of taking the boldest stand against tyranny and aggression and as such the only person to whom they could appeal in this dark hour for succour and rescue.

There is a strong Sikh tradition that when Guru Tegh Bahadur was deeply absorbed in pondering over the heart-rending appeal of the Brahmin deputationists, the young Gobind suddenly entered the *Durbar* and was wonderstruck to find complete silence reigning everywhere. After a brief pause he quietly enquired from his father as to the cause of his total self-absorption. Thereupon, Guru Tegh Bahadur explained to him the critical situation in which the people were placed and significantly added that only supreme sacrifice by a great man could ward off the grave tragedy. Readily did the boy ask his father whether there was anybody more worthy of this sacrifice than he himself. The hint was very clear. He appreciated the bold and courageous reply of his son and forthwith decided to offer himself for the gallant deed. The Brahmins were then instructed to go away and

tell the authorities that they would have no objection to changing their creed provided the Sikh Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur, was first prevailed upon to embrace Islam.

For the next two months Guru Tegh Bahadur was busy finalizing his programme. Before he voluntarily left Chak Nanaki on his great mission, he was careful to nominate his son, Gobind, as his successor and even performed the installation ceremony by offering him the usual marks of *Guruship* : a *Tilak* on the forehead, <sup>5</sup> pice and one cocoanut<sup>6</sup>. This speaks amply for his resolute determination, or the high character of his mission. No doubt was left in the mind of anyone present that it was going to be a do or die mission.

The actual date to the Guru's departure from home, on the basis of *Bhat Vahis* and *Guru Kian Sakhian*, was 10/11 *Sawan*, 1732 B.K. (10/11 July 1675 A.D.). Three eminent persons who were the closest to Guru Tegh Bahadur, namely Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das and Bhai Dayal Das, accompanied him on the journey<sup>7</sup>. The direction of the journey was towards Delhi. It is all but precisely known why the Guru started in this direction, what programme he had in view, whom he wanted to meet and for what purpose.<sup>8</sup> Apparently, he hoped to meet the Emperor at Delhi, plead the cause of the non-Muslim subjects with him, and in the event of the Emperor's unfavourable reaction suffer the consequences.

Only a day or so after the departure, the Guru together with his three faithful devotees was arrested on 12 *Sawan*, 1732 B.K. (12 July 1675 A.D.) at a village called Malikpur Rangharan, *Pargana* Ghanaula. The arrests were made by Mirza Nur Muhammad Khan, officer-incharge of the Ropar Police Post<sup>9</sup>. A significant point to be noted here is that the arrests came so soon after the commencement of the journey. It is unthinkable that Guru Tegh Bahadur had, since his departure only one or two days ago, done anything which might have given such a mighty offence to the Government. Even if for argument's sake this conjecture is allowed, it is unthinkable that on that basis the Government could have acted so quickly. Obviously, the decision was taken much earlier, long

before the Guru's departure from Chak Nanaki. As regards the grounds on which the decision might have been taken, it is again a matter of conjecture. It might be the Brahmin deputation's appeal to the Guru for help and his bold response, or what is more probable, it might be some official news-writers, coloured reports about the marvellous success of his Malwa tour a few months earlier<sup>11</sup>.

From Ropar the prisoners were sent under strong military guard to Sirhind where they were kept for a pretty long period and put to great hardships. After that they were transferred, all together and under a heavy guard, to Delhi where they were detained for 8 days in the Kotwali, Chandni Chowk. The total period of detention at both the places, according to *Bhat Vahi Purbi Dakhni*<sup>12</sup>, was a little more than four months. Like Sirhind, at Delhi too, Guru Tegh Bahadur was detained in a narrow cell and subjected to harsh treatment. The three devoted followers of the Guru were likewise rigorously guarded and put to severe tortures. But whatever be their severity, all these tortures were borne with a composure of mind rarely met in history.

What could be the grounds on which such severe and barbaric tortures were inflicted on Guru Tegh Bahadur and his three companions? The commonly told story that the Guru refused to embrace Islam as ordered or expected by the Emperor offers but the immediate explanation.

First, he was not allowed to travel peacefully and was arrested almost immediately after he had set out from his headquarters. Secondly, he was detained for a long time at Sirhind before the decision to transfer him to Delhi was taken and almost from the beginning was subjected to rigorous tortures. Thirdly, the punishments later awarded to all of the prisoners without any exception were too harsh and too barbaric for such a simple cause. Naturally, the matter needs a deeper probing. Possibly, the Malwa and Bangar Desh tour of Guru Tegh Bahadur during the years 1673 and 1674 A.D. had created some misplaced misgivings in official circles about his intentions. Only a few years earlier the Emperor in his over anxiety to convert India into *Darul Islam* (the land of Islam) had launched his all-out campaign of forcible



conversions and demolition of non-Muslims' temples. He was naturally very sensitive to and intolerant of any criticism or resistance, right or wrong, to his programmes. It was in such a frame of mind that he received reports from his news-writers and local officials about the large numbers of people rallying to the Guru in the Malwa region for listening to and benefiting by his teachings. The Guru was no agitator and he had no such intention as that of raising a rebellion against the Government. But there seems no doubt that he was bringing about a great enlightenment among them by giving them a new faith, a new ideology and the spirit of resisting evil, whatever be its form or nature. Such was the impact of his travels in the areas that hundreds of people sometimes marched with him and thousands of them attended his specially held functions. If we are to believe the statement of Munshi Sohan<sup>13</sup> Lal in his famous work, *Umdat-ut-Twarikh*, the large following of Guru Tegh Bahadur included a good number of powerful *Zamindars* and other people who otherwise cared the least for the authority of the Government. Even small things such as these would be enough to alarm any Government. But they were often exaggerated and distorted by the official news-writers so that the Emperor who was already in a hypersensitive mood, could readily misconstrue them and put into them meanings which in fact, did not exist.

How far misrepresentation could go may be evident from what the author of *Siyur-ul-Mutakhirin*, Ghulam Hussain, has written on the subject<sup>14</sup>. "This man (Tegh Bahadur) finding himself at the head of so many thousands of people, became aspiring, and he united his concerns with one Hafyz Adeem<sup>15</sup>, a Muhammadan fakir.....These two men no sooner saw themselves followed by multitudes implicitly abdicated to their chief's will than forsaking every honest calling they fell to subsisting by plunder and rapine, laying waste the whole province of Punjab."

This is a later account. Similarly coloured and exaggerated reports of Guru Tegh Bahadur's tour through the Malwa districts of Punjab must have reached the Emperor. It is clear that this tour was a reverberating success and that a considerable number of followers attached themselves to the Guru during these travels.

This must have caused local officials and the central authority in Delhi some concern. The inevitable consequence was the Guru's arrest. All of Guru Tegh Bahadur's activities were of course dictated by his divine mission to work for the moral and spiritual upliftment of the people irrespective of caste, creed and sex. This mission he could not abdicate and was prepared to suffer all consequences for his unalterable adherence to it.

As was usual with the Mughal Government,<sup>16</sup> a choice was offered to the Guru as well as his followers between the acceptance of Islam and death. When this was spurned outright, the offer was converted into a choice between miracle and death. In all probability, the change in the offer was intended to test the spiritual power of the Guru. But for the Guru the new choice was no better for he was as firmly opposed to the display of miracles or occult powers as to the acceptance of Islam. Sikh chronicles are replete with references to repeated attempts on the part of the authorities to pressurise the Guru into accepting Islam and failing that into displaying a miracle. But he remained unshaken in his resolve. The whole tenor of Sikhism was against the use of occult powers. Furthermore, he had seen with his own eyes how his own brothers, Baba Atal and Baba Gurditta, and a grandson of his, Ram Rai, had suffered grievously for commission of such indiscretions.

All through the period of detention the pressure of tortures was maintained vigorously. Rather, it rose in its intensity with the authorities' failure to bring round Guru Tegh Bahadur to their way of thinking. Our writers have told many interesting stories about this period, many of which cannot stand the test of scrutiny. One of them gives a graphic account of several meetings between Emperor Aurangzeb and Guru Tegh Bahadur, even as much as reproducing the dialogue between the two. The whole of this story is a subsequent development since Aurangzeb during the period was at Hassan Abdal on the north-west frontier and not at Delhi. All the same, it appears that some mixing up of traditions may have taken place in this respect over the centuries. The tradition of their meeting has a sure basis but relates to the earlier occasion

when in 1665 the Guru was arrested from Dhamdhan and produced at the imperial *Durbar* at Delhi for cross-examination. Following *Badshah Buranji* we can say that even then the authorities had acted under a misapprehension and the Guru was sentenced to death<sup>17</sup> after his persistent refusal to accede to the wishes of the Emperor in the matter of conversion or display of miracles. It was only Raja Ram Singh's successful intercession with the Emperor that the catastrophe was averted.

Another story is related about the escape of Bhai Gurditta and Bhai Uda from prison. It is said that after Bhai Mati Das was killed, some of the other Sikh prisoners felt so much terrorized that they approached the Guru to help them in their escape. Thereupon, the Guru worked a miracle and their chains were broken, the doors opened automatically and two of them Bhai Gurditta and Bhai Uda escaped. This whole thing again is a complete concoction. There were only three men arrested along with the Guru and they were all executed.<sup>18</sup> According to still another story the Guru helped in the escape of some of his Sikhs because he wanted to send through them a message to his son at Chak Nanaki. As the account goes, they were instructed to carry the insignia of *Guruship* to Chak Nanaki and offer it on his behalf to his son. This account also makes no sense because Guru Tegh Bahadur, as noticed earlier, had performed the nomination of his son, Gobind Das, as his successor prior to his departure from Chak Nanaki and hence there was no need of repeating it.

Nevertheless, it is not denied that no communication transpired between the father and the son during the period of incarceration, though it was an extremely difficult affair. One such example is of an exchange<sup>19</sup> of two *Slokas* both of which are incorporated in the *Guru Granth Sahib* (p. 1429 *Slokas* 54 and 55).

The prolonged ordeal through which the Guru and his noted Sikhs were passing, at last came to an end with their executions on *Maghar Sudi* 5, 1732 B.K.<sup>20</sup> (November 11, 1675) at a place where now stands Gurdwara Sis Ganj (Chandni Chowk, Delhi). The manner of their execution was in keeping with the manner they were subjected to tortures as prisoners. Bhai Mati Das was sawn

alive. Bhai Dyala was boiled to death and Bhai Sati Das was burnt to death, wrapped all over with cotton. The Guru's turn was the last. The brutal tragedies had been enacted in his sight. But nothing, not even the barbaric execution of his dearest ones, could unnerve him, or shake his resolve. He offered himself to the executioner's sword in a spirit of complete resignation to the Will of God. In a split second the whole drama was over. The holy head was severed from the body and lay on the ground soaked in a pool of blood.

After the execution, the head as well as the body of Guru Tegh Bahadur were deliberately left lying on the road with the object, perhaps, of imparting a stern warning to all such people as dared to go against the wishes and orders of the Emperor. But how could good Sikhs tolerate this ? The same night the head was quietly removed by one Bhai Nanu, a pious Sikh of Mohalla Dilwali, Delhi. He shared this secret with one of his close neighbours, Bhai Jaita<sup>21</sup> who was a *Rangreta* Sikh. Then the sacred head was placed in a basket which was covered over carefully and carried to Chak Nanaki. The three people who performed this gallant deed were Bhai Nanu, Bhai Jaita and Bhai Uda,<sup>22</sup> resident of Ladwa now in the Karnal District. They left Delhi on the morning of 13 November and reached Kiratpur on 15 November.<sup>23</sup> The head was accorded a right royal reception by Guru Gobind Singh at Kiratpur, five miles ahead of his place and was carried in a procession to Chak Nanaki where it was cremated with full honours<sup>24</sup> on 16 November 1675.

As for the Guru's body, Bhai Lakhi Shah helped by his sons, Nagahiya, Hema and Harhi and Dhuma son of Kanha whisked it away on *Maghar Sudi* 6, 1732 B.K./12 November 1675<sup>25</sup> on one of their carts laden with lime to their home in village Rikab Ganj. Being apprehensive that they might be chased and punished, they put the body in their house and set it on fire the same evening, a little after dark. It is said that a police posse did arrive on the scene in search of the body but finding every body crying bitterly, felt helpless and returned. That sacred spot is now marked by a beautiful *Gurdwara* called Gurdwara Rikab Ganj.

*References and Foot Notes :*

1. The information regarding this date is obtained from *Bhat Vahi Talauda Pargana Jind*. The evidence of the *Bhat Vahi* is corroborated by *Guru Kian Sakhian* by Sarup Singh Kaushish.

From the *Bhat Vahi* :

“Kirpa Ram beta Arhu Ram ka pota Narain Das ka parpota Brahm das ka bans Thakur Das ka Bhardwaji Gotra Sarsut Dat Brahmin basi Mattan pargana Srinagar des Kashmir, khoras mukhi Brahmanon ka sang lai ke Chak Nanaki aaya, pargana Kehlur me sambat satrai sai battis Jeth mase sudi ikadsi ke dihon, Guru Tegh Bahadur Mehl Nama ...ne ine dhiraj dai”.

2. *Maasir-i-Alamgiri*, pp. 69. He was *Subahdar* of Kashmir from Sept. 1671 to April 1676. Macauliffe and some Sikh writers, basing their information on *Suraj Prakash*, Ras 12, Ansu 27, give the name of Kashmir's Viceroy as Sher Afghan Khan. But this is not corroborated by *Maasir-i-Alamgiri* and other sources.
3. *Shahid Bilas*, pp. 59-60.
4. They were not all drawn from Kashmir but hailed from different places including Kurukshetra, Hardwar, etc. Common grievances had brought them together. The lead at this critical juncture was provided by Kirpa Ram who had close contacts with the Ninth Guru.
5. Pandit Kirpa Ram was son of Bhai Arhu and grandson of Bhai Narain Das who was son of Bhai Brahm Das, a devoted Sikh of Guru Nanak. According to the *Rahatnama* of Bhai Chaupa Singh, Kirpa Ram was one of *Sahibzada* Gobind Das's teachers at Patna. According to *Bhat Vahis* and Kesar Singh Chhibbar's *Bansavali Nama*, Kirpa Ram later accepted *Khande da Amrit* and became a full-fledged Singh and died a martyr while fighting in the battle of Chamkaur (A.D. 1705)  
For details see *Shahid Bilas*, p. 59
6. “Sawan parbishte athven ka dihon Guru Gobind Das ji ko Gurgaddi ka tikka de ke Dilli ki taraf jane ki tiyari ki, sath Diwan Mati Das, Sati Das Rasoya bete Hira Nand Chhibbar ke, Dayal Das beta Mai Das ka Jalhana Balaut aaya” (*Bhat Vahi Talauda Pargana Jind*. For corroboration see *Guru Kian Sakhian* (ms).
7. According to Bhai Santokh Singh, Gyani Gyan Singh and Macauliffe, besides these three persons Bhai Gurditta and Bhai Uda were also with the Guru on the journey. This, however, does not find support in the *Bhat Vahis* and *Guru Kian Sakhian*, though it may be said that they were present in Delhi when Guru Tegh Bahadur was under detention in the *Kotwali* building, Chandni Chowk.
8. At this time the Emperor was at Hassan Abdal and not at Delhi. He left Delhi for the north-west frontier on 7 April 1674, remained at Hassan Abdal from June 1674 to 23 December 1675 (*Maasir-i-Alamgiri*, pp. 81-82, 91-

92). When the Emperor was marching towards Hassan Abdal in the summer months of 1674 A.D., Guru Tegh Bahadur happened to be in the midst of the Malwa area, far away from the main highway passing through Sirhind. Malwa not being easily accessible and considering the difficulty of communication in that age, it is not surprising that the Guru had no idea about the exact whereabouts of the Emperor. The normal expectation was that he would be at his capital, Delhi.

9. For details see *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi*, Khata Balauton (Punjabi University, Patiala).
10. It is stated that the Kashmiri Pandits after meeting the Guru went to the Governor of Lahore, Zalim Khan and presented to him a petition to be forwarded to Emperor Aurangzeb. The Emperor was pleased to receive the petition and issued orders to summon the Guru to the Imperial Court. An official appeared at Chak Nanaki for the purpose but found that the Guru had already left. Now, all this seems to be difficult to accept because even after the arrest had been effected, the Guru was not taken to Hassan Abdal where the Emperor was staying at the time.

It may also be noted that the *Subahdar* of Lahore at this time was not Zalim Khan but Fidai Khan, (*Maasir-i-Alamgiri*, p. 72).

From the *Bhat Vahi* :

"Guru Tegh Bahadur ji Mehl Nama ko Nur Muhammad Khan Mirza Chauki Ropar wale ne sal satrai sai battis Sawan parbishte baran ke dihon gaon Malikpur Ranghran pargana Ghanaula se pakar ke Sirhind pahunchaya gailo Diwan Mati Das Sati Das bete Hira Mal Chhibbar ke, gail Dayal Das beta Mai Das Balaut ka pakarya aaya. Guru ji char mas Bassi Pathanan ke bandikhane band rahe, aath divas Dilli Kotwali me band rahe".

11. In face of the *Bhat Vahi* evidence about the arrest of the Guru at Malikpur, a few miles from Ropar on the road to Kiratpur neither the statement of Koer Singh Kalal, author of *Gurbilas Patshahi Das*, relating to the Guru's arrest in a garden near Delhi nor that of Macauliffe (IV, 376-77) based on *Suraj Prakash*, Ras 12 (Ansu 30-37) in respect of the Guru's arrest at Agra seems historically valid. The story of the shepherd boy, as related in the above Sikh accounts, appears very much like a fable.
12. Kesar Singh Chhibbar (*Bansavati Nama*) mentions 4 months as the total period of the Guru's detention at Sirhind and Delhi both, whereas according to *Bhat Vahi Purbi Dakhni* it was a little more than that, 4 months at Sirhind and 8 days at Delhi.
13. *Daftar* I, p. 48
14. *Siyur-ul-Mutakhrin*, English tr. Raymond (R. Combray and Co.), p. 85. It appears that this account was based on some official newswriters' reports containing elements of both exaggeration and distortion.
15. Hafyz Adeem (Banoori) left Hindustan and died at Medina in 1643 A.D. Therefore, his making a common cause with Guru Tegh Bahadur is historically wrong. For details see Nazeer Ahmad Deobandi, *Tazkrat-ul-Abdin*,

pp. 124-125; Maulvi Ghulam Nabi, *Mirat-ul-Qaunain*, p. 417; Mirza Muhammad Akhtar's *Tazkara-i-Auliya-i-Hind-wa-Pakistan*, p. 401; Saiyad Abdul Hayee Hasani Rai-Bareilvi, *Nazzat-ul-Khwatir*, vol. 5, pp. 1-2. Even otherwise, too, being a disciple of *Mujadid Alf Sani*, there was no possibility of his joining the Guru. For this information, I am thankful to Dr G.S. Anand.

16. According to *Maasir-i-Alamgiri* (pp. 69 & 82) the *Nazim* of Delhi and the *Qiladar* of Delhi at this time were Safi Khan and Multafat Khan respectively. Safi Khan was appointed to this post in April 1674 and Multafat Khan in 1671 A.D.

17. S. K. Bhuyan, *op. cit.*, Sakhi 116.

18. *Bhat Vahi Talauda* and *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi* (Punjabi University, Patiala). From the *Bhat Vahi* :

“Dayal Das beta Mai Das ka pota Balu ka parpota Mule ka Guru gailo sal satrai-sai battis *Manghar Sudi* Panchmi ko Dilli Chandni Chowk ke malhan Shahi hukam gail mara gaya, sath Sati Das, Mati Das bete Hira Mal ke Bhagwat Gotre Chhibbar Brahmin mare gaye.”

19. Almost all old Sikh writings on Guru Tegh Bahadur make a reference to this point, but our modern writers have put different constructions upon this. Of them Dr Trilochan Singh's interpretation which is based on Bhai Mani Singh's evidence, seems nearest to truth. According to him, Guru Tegh Bahadur in his *Sloka* expressed his deep concern over the helplessness of the people, whereas Guru Gobind Singh in his reply expressed his self-confidence to handle the situation with God's grace.

Dr Trilochan Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 325 (F.N.)

20. *Bhat Vahi Talauda* and *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi* (Punjabi University, Patiala).

21. According to *Bansavali Nama*, Bhai Nanu was son of Bhai Bagha and Bhai Jaita, son of Bhai Agya Ram. Both lived in Mohalla Dilwali, Delhi (*Charan* 9).

22. This Bhai Uda died a martyr in the battle of Bhangani, 1688 A.D.

23. Gurdwara Babangarh, Kiratpur, marks the place where the sacred head was received and Gurdwara Sis Ganj, Anandpur Sahib, marks the site where it was cremated.

24. *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi* (Punjabi University, Patiala).

From the *Bhat Vahi* :

“Jaita beta Agya Ram ka Nanu beta Baghe ka, Uda beta Khema ka pota Parme ka...Guru ka sis pae Kiratpur pargana Kehlur aae, sal satrai-sai battis Mangsar Sudi dasmi ke din, gyaras ko dag diya Makhawal me”.

25. *Bhat Vahi Jadobansian Khata Barhtia Kanavton ka*. From the *Bhat Vahi* :

“Lakhiya beta Godhu ka, Nagahiya Hema Harhi bete Lakhiya ke barhtiya kanaunt, Naik Dhuma beta Kanhe ka Bijlaut Guru Tegh Bahadur ji Mehl Naven ki loth uthae lae, sal satrai-sai battis Mangasar Sudi Chhat Shukarvar ko dag diya aadh ghari rat gai”.

Lakhi Shah was son of Bhai Godhu. He was a famous contractor of Delhi and had deep faith in the Sikh Gurus. He died on 30 *Jeth Sudi* II, 1737 B.K. (24 May 1680) *vide Dohas* of Bhat Kesho. He was the father-in-law of Bhai Mani Singh.



## VIII

### VISION, ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

#### I

Guru Tegh Bahadur inherited his vision or world-view from his predecessor Gurus. He assumed the leadership of Sikhism nearly 200 years after its foundation by Guru Nanak. Before it was his turn to guide its destinies, the movement had taken long strides and developed its own ethos, its own philosophy of life, its own institutions. All of them formed the heritage of Guru Tegh Bahadur. His vision, therefore, was the same as had already been propounded by Sikhism. He stood for the same system of moral, social and spiritual values as had been underscored by the previous Gurus. Still, his writings which are incorporated in the holy Guru Granth Sahib of the Sikhs and which form the subject-matter of the next section, have an identity of their own for the manner in which certain elements in the Sikh philosophy are emphasized and brought into focus.

In the vision of Guru Tegh Bahadur, as it emerges from his writings whose authenticity is established beyond any doubt, the central issue is the distinction between absolute truth and relative truth. Absolute truth is the only reality, the only lasting, permanent and eternal existence which gives substance to everything else. It is the God Almighty, Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent, Most High and Most Gracious. All other things in the universe are His creation and last but for a short period. Therefore, they are like a dream<sup>1</sup>, a wall of sand, or the shadow of a cloud. The whole life of a man has an air of unreality about it. The wealth one accumulates, the buildings one constructs, one's whole com-

plex of social relations—such as ones wife, children, parents, relatives, friends, acquaintances, professional colleagues etc., etc.,—are all of ephemeral character. And one who is engrossed in them is in fact engrossed in the pursuit of unreality. But it was not his thinking that because these things are not everlasting, they have no value at all. What he stressed again and again was that while chasing them, their real character should never be lost sight of. They are not bad in themselves, but become bad only when a person gets so inextricably entangled in them that he forgets all about the absolute truth and begins to think of these very things as the final goal. In this process of thinking, inevitable death hanging fearfully over every man's head, is the nature's unfailing agency through which we are repeatedly reminded of the all-important distinction between what is ephemeral and what is not.

In this world-view what is it that a man ought to do? Guru Tegh Bahadur regarded the attainment of *Nirban Pad* (also called *Amar Pad*, *Achal Pad* and *Mukat Pad*) as the highest goal of man's life.<sup>2</sup> By this was meant that blissful state where joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, praise and dispraise, respect and disrespect have no effect, a state of perfect emancipation from the bonds of life. It was pointed out that the best way to achieve the goal was to lead a life of full dedication (*Bhagti*) to the Supreme Reality. This may be possible only through the cultivation of an attitude of complete detachment from the various allurements of life which impede all progress on the path of spiritual advancement. But in doing this, men are well advised not to develop any unhealthy prejudice against normal family and social life which is a cardinal doctrine of Sikhism.

True to his exalted vision, Guru Tegh Bahadur dedicated his life to the high ideals he had set before himself. He led a normal married life and did not shy away from his personal and social responsibilities.<sup>3</sup> But he always avoided getting bogged into any entanglement and devoted most of his time to spiritual advancement. From his childhood period he was known to be fond of solitude and later during his long stay at village Bakala, he had an underground cell specially prepared for *Hari Simran* (meditation).

But *Hari Simran* or *Bhagti* alone was not the desideratum. It was to be combined with *Shakti* to offer a full view of the Guru's philosophy of life. In this respect the beau ideal before him was his own father, Guru Hargobind who while ascending the *Gurgaddi* had put on two swords representing *Miri* (temporal) and *Piri* (spiritual) aspects of the Guru's office, which were the same as *Bhagti* and *Shakti*. Like his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur wanted to be a warrior and during his childhood period alongside of other education he acquired training in the use of arms and weapons as well. While a young lad of 14 years, he took an active part in the battle of Kartarpur and won encomiums from his father. On the basis of his wonderful feats of gallantry in the field a popular tradition has grown up that in token of appreciation, his name was changed from Tyag Mal to Tegh Bahadur. From quite early in life he developed a fondness for hunting which never left him thereafter. After he was elevated to *Guruship*, he travelled widely and in course of his travels conducted himself in the manner of a chief, fond of horse-riding, wearing arms with a *Kalgi* on the turban, followed by a large retinue, just as his warrior father used to do.<sup>4</sup>

Guru Tegh Bahadur's philosophy of *Shakti* was not new but was a continuation of the same weighty considerations as had induced his father to introduce the element of militancy into the Sikh faith of his predecessors. The martyrdom of Guru Arjan had driven home the conviction that with the Mughal challenge looming large on the horizon there was an urgent need to fight tyranny and to defend *Dharma*. The situation had not shown any change for the better since then. Rather the clouds on the horizon had thickened, particularly after Aurangzeb's accession to the throne. In view of this, it would have been nothing short of apathy to reality if Guru Tegh Bahadur had acted differently.

## II

From his vision we pass on to the achievements of Guru Tegh Bahadur. In this connection three things stand out. The first is the foundation of Chak Nanaki which was also often called Makhawal. This was the nucleus of the town which in the time of the Tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, became famous under the name of Anandpur

Sahib. Ever since then the place has figured prominently in Sikh annals and today is counted among the few major seats of Sikh religion. It was here that the Khalsa was created by Guru Gobind Singh at the end of the seventeenth century. Much of the credit for such a conspicuous role of Anandpur Sahib in subsequent periods goes to the Ninth Guru for the sagacity and farsightedness shown by him in selecting the site.

The second achievement of Guru Tegh Bahadur was his many years of continuous work among the Sikh *Sangats* outside the region of Punjab. Although links with these *Sangats* had been continually maintained by the preceding Gurus, yet no Guru had personally visited them ever since their establishment in the time of Guru Nanak or later. Guru Tegh Bahadur was a great traveller, almost tireless, and undertook long and arduous journeys to meet Sikh *Sangats* residing in farflung areas of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal and Assam. As a result of his personal contact, these congregations were revived and their organization was considerably improved. Of all the places honoured by his visits, Patna has become the most sacred place in East India for the Sikh community, for it was here that the last Guru of the Sikhs (*Dasmesh Pita*), Guru Gobind Singh, was born. The place, reverently called Patna Sahib, is now recognized, like Anandpur Sahib, as one of the major centres of Sikhism.

The third and the most important achievement of the Guru was his fight against tyranny. Emperor Aurangzeb's fanatical measures to establish a pure Islamic State in the country, converting it into *Darul Islam*, had sent a wave of horror through the length and breadth of India. Ruthless destruction of temples and schools, forcible conversions and discrimination in fiscal administration unnerved the entire body of non-Muslims. In this state of utter demoralization, a deputation of Brahmins waited upon Guru Tegh Bahadur at Chak Nanaki and by a passionate appeal secured a promise from him that he would even lay down his life to rescue them from their critical position. But for him it was not a question merely of saving the Hindu religion or even for that matter, the Sikh religion. It was a question of defending *Dharma* in the largest

Indian connotation. Understood in this sense, it was identical with the concept of righteousness which was a synonym for the whole system of values dearly cherished in Indian society. Oppression or tyranny in any form was construed as an attack on *Dharma* and had to be struggled against in the name and defence of *Dharma*.<sup>5</sup>

This aspect of the scope of *Dharmas* needs to be clearly grasped, as the background against which the Guru operated included not merely religious tyranny but also the tyranny practised against common people in the countryside. The extortionate policies of the Mughal *Jagirdars*, aided by the indifference or incompetence of the Imperial Government, were driving the cultivators in large numbers into a state of desperation where they had to choose between a life of outlaws and rebels and a state of flight to neighbouring *Zamindars*' lands and enlistment in their contingents of retainers. Realizing the gravity of the situation, the Guru moved among the people and gave them his message of solace, cheer and courage embodied in the motto, 'Fear not and Frighten Not.' The much-too-sensitive Government got alarmed at this and ordered his arrest. He was kept in prison for four odd months and subjected to serve tortures. All possible pressure was brought to bear upon him to make him agree to become a Musalman and failing that, to show some miracle to prove his bona fides as a true saint. He did neither of the two and in consequence suffered death and earned the crown of martyrdom. Verily he laid down his precious life in the cause of righteousness.

### III

The supreme sacrifice of such a great and revered man as Guru Tegh Bahadur could not but leave a profound impact on the minds of the people. In the words of Dr Indubhusan Banerjee, "The whole Punjab began to burn with indignation and revenge"<sup>6</sup>. The martyrdom of Guru Arjan, earlier, had produced the doctrine of *Miri* and *Piri* in the time of his immediate successor, Guru Hargobind. The martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur produced the militant brotherhood of Khalsa in the time of his immediate successor, Guru Gobind Singh. The urgency of a more closely knit and disciplined organization was never felt more strongly and

more intensely than at the time of Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution at Delhi in 1675 A.D. His young successor devoted immediate attention to the problem and launched a vigorous programme of militarization of his community. But if knowledge of use of arms and weapons was necessary for the success of his programme, even more necessary was the building up of the right type of psyche in the minds of his followers. In view of this he ransacked practically the entire body of ancient heroic literature and with sanction of the past presented to his people a well-rounded philosophy of *Dharmyudh*. Participants in such a war of righteousness were proclaimed as God's warriors, battling under God's protection and winning God's victories. The seeds of this philosophy were there in Sikhism from its very beginning. Therefore, what Guru Gobind Singh gave was not something alien to the Sikh doctrine but only a more explicit exposition of the ideas that were somewhat nebulous before him. It was on the basis of such a conception of *Dharmyudh* that the Khalsa was created through a specially devised mode of baptism called *Khande di Pahul* (nectar of the double-edged sword). This novel experiment proved a thorough success and when Guru Gobind Singh was about to conclude his life's span, he conferred responsibilities of leadership for future on the Khalsa and put an end to the line of personal Gurus. All this development may largely be traced back to the great impact of the high-handed execution of the Ninth Guru in 1675 at the hands of Aurangzeb's government.

A well-entrenched Sikh tradition also connects the origin of the 5 *Ks* with the tragic events of 1675. It is said that when at the time some Sikhs at Delhi were questioned as to their religious identity, they denied their being Sikhs. In due course the news reached Anandpur Sahib. As the story goes, Guru Gobind Singh took a serious note of it and determined to bestow on his followers such distinctive marks as would render impossible for future any repetition of what had come to pass at Delhi in 1675. Hence the introduction of the 5 *Ks* which since then have played a major role in preserving the distinctiveness of the Sikh people.

*References and Foot Notes :*

1. Guru Tegh Bahadur, *Slokas* 23, 25, 41, 49, 51, 52 (*Guru Granth Sahib*, pp. 1427-28); also Rag Sarang (*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1231).
2. Guru Tegh Bahadur, Rag Bilawal, (*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 830).
3. One has only to read his letters addressed to the *Patna Sangat* to know the amount of interest he felt in the well-being of his family left behind at Patna. See Ganda Singh (ed.), *Hukamname* (Patiala, 1967), *Hukamnama* No. 21.
4. Recently a painting of Guru Tegh Bahadur has been discovered from the Sangat Tola Gurdwara, Dacca. In this painting the Guru has been depicted as a warrior with a *Kalgi* on the head and a falcon perched on the hand. Besides, there are several references pertaining to his hunting expeditions in the course of his travels.
5. A fundamental postulate of Guru Nanak's thought was that the world is a *Dharamsal*, the abode of *Dharma*, a place where *Dharma*, the Law of Morality, governs all human activities, whatever be their sphere or nature. In the over-all Divine Scheme of things, observance of Moral Law (*Dharamkhand*) marks the first vital stage in the process of spiritual evolution towards *Sachkhand* (Abode of Truth). To uphold *Dharma* individually and to defend it at all costs in face of any challenge to it was a core doctrine of Sikh society chiselled by the Sikh Gurus, as is made clear in Guru Gobind Singh's *Bachittar Natak*.
6. Indubhusan Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa* (1962), Vol. II, p. 63.  
A good illustration of Sikh's reaction is provided by an incident on 27. 10. 1676, when a Sikh flung two bricks on Aurangzeb when he was alighting from a boat on his return from the Jama Masjid. The Sikh was captured and handed over to the *Kotwal*. *Maasir-i-Alamgiri*, p. 94.

**PART II**

**GURU TEGH BAHADUR'S SACRED WRITINGS  
IN ENGLISH RENDERING**

**GURBACHAN SINGH TALIB**



## INTRODUCTION TO THE COMPOSITIONS OF GURU TEGH BAHADUR

Guru Tegh Bahadur's *Bani* or sacred compositions were incorporated in Granth Sahib a few years after his martyrdom, which occurred in Bikrami year 1732 (A.D. 1675). During his life-time these compositions must have been in circulation in the form of *pothis* or scriptural texts among devotees, and sung or recited in prayers and religious assemblies. The earliest manuscript copy of Granth Sahib in which this *Bani* may be seen to have been incorporated at the appropriate places in the Scripture under the *ragas* or musical measures in proper sequence as to the composers (Gurus and Bhaktas) is that numbered 97 in the collection of the Sikh Reference Library at Amritsar. This copy bears on the colophon the year 1739 (Bikrami Era) which would work out to the year 1682 of the Christian Era.

The year of the copy of the Scripture under discussion is highly interesting. According to the commonly accepted date of Guru Gobind Singh's birth (1666), he would be 16 years old at the time. (There is another view, not yet established, according to which he was born in 1661). Be that as it may, it is certain that the youthful Guru Gobind Singh commanded a standard and complete copy of Granth Sahib to be prepared, incorporating his holy father's compositions on exactly the same principles on which the Volume, as compiled by Guru Arjan Dev in 1604, had been prepared.

In the copies bearing dates earlier than this (e.g. No. 3 in the Sikh Reference Library Collection, bearing the date 11th of the Bright Half of Maghar, 1722 B.K./ (1665), Guru Tegh Bahadur's *Bani* is found incorporated afterwards, in a different hand. In other

copies, such as the one bearing the date 1745 B.K./ 1688 also Guru Tegh Bahadur's *Bani* is found added as appendix in one place and in a different hand from the rest of the Volume. Other copies from the seventeenth century may be seen, in which this *Bani* is seen on the clearest internal evidence to be added to the Volume after its text as in Guru Arjan's Volume had been copied out. This shows that at some period, most probably around 1680, after Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom, the new Guru Gobind Singh, (then known as Gobind Rai) Commanded that his holy father's *Bani* be made a part of the Canon and incorporated in the sacred volume. Hence the preparation of the new, complete Volume, which is now the standard text of the Scripture as recognized and held sacred.

After the command of the Guru became known as to the inclusion of Guru Tegh Bahadur's *Bani*, all the fresh copies were made in accordance with the new, completed text. In the copies pre-existing, as stated above, Guru Tegh Bahadur's *Bani* was added—in some copies in one place at the end, in others at the different appropriate places—after inserting fresh pages and rebinding those copies previously in existence. The Slokas of Guru Tegh Bahadur, fifty-seven in number, were added at the close, before Guru Arjan's *Mundavani* (seal-couplets), after the Slokas of the Gurus and Bhaktas. Coming at the close, these Slokas of Guru Tegh Bahadur, now form the finale of the ritual recitation of Granth Sahib. Their deeply moving content, reminding man of the evanescence of life and its concerns which engage his affections, leave the human heart bathed in tears of emotion, which bring about enlightenment and awakening of the soul from the slumber of involvement with worldliness. As couplet after couplet pours in, culminating in the last half dozen, bringing before the imagination the person of the Guru, in the prison of Aurangzeb, bearing his suffering in the spirit of complete detachment from the joy and sorrow of the world, and with faith in the ultimate triumph of Right, the human spirit takes courage to bear its own trials and sufferings in life without flinching. This is the spiritual and moral effect of this *Bani* which emanated from the Guru's soul face to

face with trials, as these have come in the course of history to the purest and greatest among mankind.

### *Guru Tegh Bahadur's Teaching*

In accordance with the emotional-content theory of Indian poetics, called *rasa-siddhanta*, the prevailing tone and theme of Guru Tegh Bahadur's spiritual compositions is *vairag*-dispassion towards the world and its concerns. This is how Kavi Santokh Singh<sup>1</sup> too in his narrative of the Guru's Life on the composition of the Slokas characterizes these pieces. But not the Slokas only, the entire *Bani* of the Guru, brief though its volume be, is built mainly on this theme of *vairag*. A great teacher, such as Guru Tegh Bahadur, must turn man's mind away from those pursuits which appear of such great value to the ordinary man with the soul unawakened, and induce into him the attitude of devotion and that deep content which sees no attractiveness in what the world covets—wealth, power, pleasures of the flesh and activities which satisfy the lower urges in general. This teaching acquires power over the mind of man when issuing from the personality of a teacher who has completely obliterated the distance between his deeds and words—nay, even his thoughts. The words of such a teacher acquire tremendous power to move and to inspire, so that through them the heart is left converted and men are willing gladly to sacrifice life and bear oppression for the conviction inspired by such teaching. This has been the effect on millions of Guru Tegh Bahadur's teaching, as indeed of Guru Arjan Dev and the other teachers in the holy line of the Gurus.

In Guru Tegh Bahadur's teaching the prevailing attitude is Bhakti—devotion to a personally-realized and loved Supreme Being, the Lord, who is compassionate, gracious and the upholder of the moral order in the universe. He can be approached through meditation (*simran-smaran*), laudation (*Kirtan*) and the sacrifice of egoism. To worship Him is to find peace and cessation from the suffering of the cycle of births and deaths, enlightenment (*jnan-gian*) and *mukti* (liberation). This last concept, as shall be discussed below, is not a negative state of nescience, but the posi-

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1. *Gurpartap Suraj Granth*.

tive state of achieving purification of self from the filth of worldiness attending it. This state is known by several names including *nirban* (*nirvana*) and is the highest state of moral fulfilment and realization. Towards such ascent the teaching of Guru Tegh Bahadur draws the seeker.

Guru Tegh Bahadur employs in a somewhat larger measure than his predecessors in the holy office of Guruship the traditional imagery of Bhakti, particularly from the Puranic lore of India, such as the story of the Elephant rescued by Vishnu from the Crocodile, of the sinner Ajamal and the courtesan Ganika liberated through meditation on the Lord, and the pure noble woman Draupadi succoured by the Lord as she supplicated Him for help in her state of the deepest agony of humiliation. The employment of such imagery in greater measure is undoubtedly due to the need for making the Guru's teaching more easily comprehensible to the common masses, already conditioned to respond to the traditional Bhakti lore of India. In an age of bigoted oppression such as Aurangzeb's reign, the greater need was not for propounding a philosophy, but for converting the hearts and souls of men away from their state of moral insensitiveness and infusing them with the spirit of sacrifice. For this, the lure of the world must be dimmed and sacrifice and suffering lose their terror. As against the soft, effeminate practice of Bhakti then prevalent among the various Krishna cults and the attitude of what can only be called 'escape' from the harsh realities of puissant evil in the world, the Guru taught the Bhakti of devotion, sacrifice and the transcendence of the lower urges. This teaching he confirmed in the mind of the people through his own life of self-denial, purity and sacrifice.

An element very pronounced in the Guru's teaching is *Brahm Gian* which is the realization of the higher spiritual and moral truths. Herein the Guru is in line with the great spiritual thought of India, which has emphasized the higher wisdom of detachment, control of passion and attainment of the unruffled poise, called *shanti* in Indian thought. In the Guru's teaching an added element, which is the crown of the higher life, is the pursuit of the ideal without flinching uptill the stage where it may become

martyrdom. Not the intuitive realization alone (*Jnan*), nor only the ecstasy of joy in divine love (*Bhakti*), but supreme volition which pursues the vision sublime to facing the tyrant's instruments of torture, if need be. This last experience has not found expression in the spiritual and moral wisdom of India, wherein the resistance of evil by the holy is shown in the mythological adumbration to become the triumphal vindication of God's devotees through Divine intervention, as in the trials of Prahlada or Draupadi or the Elephant in the tales of the Puranic and other devotees. The dimension of the reality of physical evil, which neither prayer nor miracle may avert, but which must execute its potential movement, is what makes Guru Tegh Bahadur's teaching so deeply touching and of such value to our time in which miracles of the kind narrated in mythology are not known to occur. The Guru affirms repeatedly his faith in the ultimate triumph of Divine Justice and in God succouring His devotees. This implies not their rescue from the power of tyrants and oppressors, but the triumph of their spirit and the fulfilment of their ideals despite their physical destruction. This element in the totality of the moral vision is emphasized in the testament to truth coming over from the Christian faith and certain phases of Islam, such as the martyrdom of Imam Hussain. In India, it was the unflinching pursuit of this ideal by Guru Tegh Bahadur and his grandfather Guru Arjan which manifested its true might.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's teaching expresses the high ideals of detachment from the temptations of the world and the vision which views all creation as manifestation of the Divine Light, without distinctions of high and low, 'clean' and 'unclean'. Such distinctions arise from *ajnan* or *avidya* (spiritual ignorance). This vision comes out also in the Gita in several places. In Chapter V, Slokas 18 to 23 emphasize the undifferentiating vision of the true yogi and the joy in which his soul abides, despite sorrow and disappointment. In II-15, 38, 56 the experience in which the distinction between joy and sorrow is obliterated, is commended. In VI-8 the truly awakened soul finds no distinction between a piece of stone and a lump of gold. Guru Arjan Dev in *Sukhmani* IX-7 defines the

highest spiritual ideal in similar terms. In other places also in this text this ideal finds expression. Guru Tegh Bahadur again and again expresses the difficulties of controlling the restless impulses of the mind, called in Gita '*chanchal*' (VI-34). The sinful yearning of man, ever attracting him, draw from the Guru repeated warning and admonition. In the splendid hymn in the measure Sorath, *jo nara dukh main dukh nahin manai* (One who by suffering is unperturbed), exalted and noble poetic expression in the sustained classical, noble style is given to a vision and experience which should make it one of the great places in the spiritual literature of mankind. In numerous other places the same vision may be met with. In the *Slokas*, particularly those numbered 13 to 19, this theme again finds sustained expression. A study of this aspect of the Guru's teaching should prove highly illuminating in understanding the depth of his realization and the firm basis it provided for his own crusading for truth leading to his martyrdom.

#### *Key Terms and the Poetic Art*

In Guru Tegh Bahadur's teaching the essential key terms from Indian philosophy and the Bhakti tradition may be seen to be employed. To the average Indian these should be familiar, though with the increasing divorcement of our educated classes from the roots of their culture such knowledge may no longer be tacitly assumed. In the path of the spiritual quest commended by the Guru, certain basic assumptions in Indian thought should serve both as the conceptual framework and as the idiom of expression. Thus, *Maya* which in Sikh thought is taken particularly to mean the veil hiding Brahm (Brahman), the Supreme Reality, and hence to be the source of all false thinking and evil striving, comes in frequently. Stripped of its more abstract philosophical implications, it means in these contexts the attitude of mind involved with worldliness. It is sometimes expressed figuratively as *mrig-trishna* (mirage) or as a shadow or dream. The source of suffering is Desire (*Trishna*). Man's spiritual quest should lead to the cessation of the process of birth and death. Transmigration is assumed as axiomatic, and so also the retribution for actions, which is symbolized by Yama, the agent of such retribution. Ancillary to this concept are

'bonds' and their opposite, liberation (*Mukti*). To be born again and again is to be 'caught in Yama's noose.' To attain liberation is expressed through the imagery of 'swimming across the ocean of worldly existence.' For this several similar expressions are employed.

Other important key terms are enlightenment (*Jnan*), meditation (*Simran-Smaran*) and laudation of love of the Lord (*Guna-gaen and Bhakti*). *Jnan* is the realization of the falsehood of the show of Maya and the liberation of the mind and intellect from this illusion. There is recurring exhortation in the Guru's teaching to such realization which must entail self-purification through self-discipline, meditation and prayer (*Jap, Dhyana*). Bhakti involves love and constant chanting of hymns of divine glory. In the renderings to follow in this book, for the various terms used in the original text, 'meditation' and 'devotion' are used according to the context, the literal sense being, however, given in the foot-notes.

Another cardinal term employed by the Guru is *Jivan-mukta* (lit. liberated while alive). This is in reality a concept making a plea for the sovereignty of the moral life in religion, in contradistinction to the path of asceticism or of the search after esoteric 'experience.' One who rather than turning a mere recluse in any of the traditional denominations or orders elects to live in the midst of human sin and suffering and endeavours to uplift mankind fallen from the higher path, is called *Jivan-mukta*. This concept is akin to the Buddhistic Bodhisattva and the Karma-yogi of Gita. Guru Tegh Bahadur in the measure Bilaval, in the hymn beginning '*Hari ke Nam bina dukh pawai*' exalts the *Jivan-mukta*, who removing his egoism and attachment 'chants the Lords' praises.' This state of *Jivan-mukta* is indeed the highest and the ideal which the seeker must strive to attain. Guru Arjan Dev in *Sukhmani* has stated this concept in these words :

One whose self loves to obey the Lord's command may be called *Jivan-mukta*.

Joy and sorrow to such a one are alike :

Ever in bliss, never does he grieve.  
 Alike to him a clod of earth and a lump of gold;  
 so are *amrita* and nauseous poison.  
 Honour and neglect he holds alike;  
 And king and beggar to him are the same.  
 One whose practice in life be such,  
 Such a one, Nanak, would be known as *Jivan-mukta*.  
(*Sukhmani-IX. 7*)

One who knows the Supreme Truth is ever in bliss,  
 Such state is attained only through Divine grace.  
 Such a one alone is truly prosperous, high-born and honour-  
 able.

One in whose heart abides the Lord is truly *Jivan-mukta*.  
(*Ibid-XXIII. 8*)

Guru Tegh Bahadur's compositions are all in chaste Braji Hindi, which by the seventeenth century had acquired a semi-classical status and standardized form both for expressing spiritual and secular themes in poetry. While Bhakha (what now is called Hindi) in its various dialects had all along been in vogue for poetic creation in Punjab, its Braji variety found greater scope in this region because of geographical closeness and the cognateness with the Punjabi grammatical forms of *Khari-boli*, the modern form of Braji, out of which developed Urdu and later Hindi. In the compositions of the earlier Gurus, while Bhakha is used pretty often, it tends in their compositions to contain a fair admixture of the Punjabi idiom. The earlier among the Gurus, of course, used Punjabi for the expression particularly of the deeper phases of Bhakti. Guru Tegh Bahadur, perhaps because of his very long residence in what is now Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and further east, exclusively uses Bhakha. Moreover, he employs fixed metres (*chhands*) with greater regularity, so that his compositions lend themselves as much to metrical classification as to the musical. His was the age of Hindi classicism or neo-classicism, known as Riti-Kal. This period saw a more formal literary discipline than was associated with poetic creation in the earlier ages when the human inspiration flowed more freely without the constraint of form and tradition. The



compositions of Guru Gobind Singh also follow this traditional pattern, and for two centuries after, till the end of the nineteenth century, the most significant Sikh religious writings continued to be couched in this neo-classical style in the Braji dialect.

### *Use of Mythology*

The use of terminology of Puranic Hinduism may be noticed occurring prominently in Guru Tegh Bahadur, though this is not without example and precedent in the case of his predecessors. Even in the case of teachers in the tradition of monotheism and monism, as were the Gurus and saints like Kabir and others whose compositions found a place in Granth Sahib, the intellectual idiom, so to say, was based on the accumulated religious thought of India, which in its later varieties was mythological and hence in its implications tending to the Incarnation Principle. This use of the literary and poetic terminology by the Gurus has to be correctly interpreted, in order that the terms, even though their first referents might be Puranic, are made to convey faith in the One Indivisible Supreme Being, *Ek Onkar* or *Brahm*, which is essential to their teaching. In several places in Guru Tegh Bahadur's *Bani* man is admonished for not directing his life by the teaching of Vedas, Puranas, Simiritis. Now while these scriptures are holy, the Guru by referring to them implies religious scriptures in general, of whatever faith, of which the scriptures mentioned are only some of the most prominent representatives. What is implied is moral and spiritual teaching in general.

In referring to the Creator, the Supreme Being, names drawn from mythology, redolent of the Incarnation Principle of later Hinduism are used. Rama and Krishna, two of the manifestations of Vishnu are used without any reference to mythology, as synonyms for God in general. In the popular Indian mind, as is well-known, these are some of the commonest names for God and come to mind as easily as Allah, for example, in the Muslim tradition. *Rama-Nam* or *Hari-Nam* are employed to signify the object or medium of devotion.

Other names, recalling the Krishna-myth are employed with the same signification—as names of the Supreme Being. Thus

*Murari, Kanhai, Gobind, Narayana, Bhagavan*, are used in this sense. *Raghunath*, which is a periphrasis for Rama, is used as substitute for God. In *Sloka 50 Rama* is used in the sense of the King of Ayodhya, hero of *Ramayana* who fought *Ravana*, to exemplify the mighty who nevertheless had to depart this life. To make, however, monotheistic sense of the Guru's words clear, not only is the entire Sikh spiritual tradition there, but also his frequent use of Brahm (Brahman, the Supreme Absolute). In some places qualifying substitutes for the Divine Reality occur, such as *Chintamani, Gosain (Goswami), Karunamaya, Kripanidhi, Dayal*. Such words have been explained in the footnotes to the rendering of the hymns.

#### *On the Principles of Translation of the Hymns*

The English renderings of the Hymns and Slokas which follow are not in reality 'translations' if this term is interpreted more strictly. Translation of great poetry can at best be a compromise between literal reproduction and the complex creative process of conveying the sense, 'feel' and vision of the original. Only the highest art may succeed in the process. What has been attempted here is to convey, without violating English idiom, the sense of the original, in language which is rich with spiritual associations in English. The literal parallels, wherever necessary, have been provided in the footnotes. In most places the original term has also been indicated. The total result, I venture to hope, is a rendering which should convey to the reader as close an idea of the original as may be possible in English, of spiritual experience couched in medieval Hindi, with its associations alien to the host language.

The vocative 'thou' which has been retained from the original, is an essential part of the tradition of spiritual instruction. To substitute it by 'you' would be an utter violation of the atmosphere and flavour of the hymns rendered. Words and phrases added for emphasis are put down in italics, following the excellent examples of all renderings from the English Bible down.

While these renderings may still leave scope for improvement, it is hoped that these will help the reader to enter into the experience out of which the original creations issued. What is

intended is that these rederings should not be mere spiritless literal translations, but should touch as far as may be, the heart. This objective, it is hoped, has been achieved in a fair measure. The invocation and its placing at the opening of each *Raga* or Measure is as found in the text of the holy Granth. The Pauses and the numbering of verses in the text have been omitted, as that would only puzzle the uninitiated reader.

The footnotes are provided with two objectives particularly in view : To provide the literal parallels for the original where necessary; and secondly, to explain certain key-terms which may not be familiar to the general reader, uninitiated to the spiritual tradition of India and of the Sikh devotional literature. The pattern of transliteration adopted does not follow the one generally used for the transliteration of Sanskrit, but is the one usually employed for transliterating the modern Indian languages. The sound for 'ch' is represented by this symbol, and not by 'c' as in the case of Sanskrit. Long vowel sounds are sometimes emphasized by using double equivalents, such as 'ee', 'oo'—'i' being used only for the short sound represented by this letter. Certain well-known terms and names from classical Indian philosophy and religious history are written down as in the classical tradition. Thus, *mana*, 'Rama', 'guna'. 'Gobind' on the other hand, being especially acclimitized to the Sikh tradition is written down as indicated, corresponding to its spelling and enunciation in the original. The hard and soft 'd' have not been distinguished. Indian compound consonants, those represented by 'bh' 'dh' 'th' 'chh' 'kh' etc. are indicated by these symbols. To the Indian reader their sounds would not present any great difficulty.

Department of Religious Studies  
Punjabi University, Patiala  
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GURBACHAN SINGH TALIB

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